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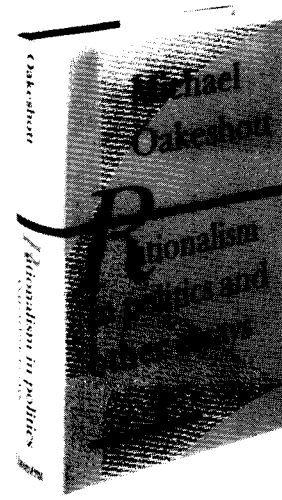

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Time on My Hands, Me in My Arms

ARISTIDES

As we grow old, our sense of the value of time becomes vivid. Nothing else indeed, seems of any consequence.
—William Hazlitt

The other night, while I was struggling to stay awake late in the second, longish act of a less than superior performance of Handel's *Semele* and my mind was floating off and wandering where it wished, two things occurred to me: first, I wasn't going to make it through the third act; and, second, evenings may not be the best time for concerts, at least not for those of us who arise early in the morning. What might be a good time for a concert? I asked myself. Ten in the morning, I decided. But then listening to serious music fairly late into the night is only one item that, in my view, is badly placed in time. Others occurred to me. Undergraduate education is probably best begun at the age of forty, when one is a bit wiser about the world and so can better test the wisdom of both books and teachers. Along with serious education, sexual vigor is probably wasted on the young. People would be better off coming into their greatest sexual strength in middle age, when they begin to know what they are doing. While I was at it, it also occurred to me that it might be useful to place death somewhere other than at the end of a person's life, so that he or she wouldn't have to spend so damn much time thinking about it.

To fill in the time between thoughts about death—the "ugly Customer," Hazlitt called it—one can think about time itself. Some of us already do, and I, increasingly as I sense my own time running out, am among them. A vast amount, in both a philosophical and a poetical way, has been said on the subject, though not much that I have seen helps. Like everyone else, I know that time flies, often going about in a winged chariot; that it is probably a sound idea not to delay picking up any rosebuds that fall within reach before the curtain drops; that some among us leave footprints in its sands; that procrastination is its thief; that it is equivalent to money; that it is the great healer; that it is the avenger, the devourer of everything, the reaper, the refreshing river; you name it, friend, time is it. So what else, you might say, is new?

Can it be that to think about time is the greatest waste of time of all? If so, I have wasted more than my share in this way. I cannot remember when time wasn't on my mind. When I was very young, I thought longingly of how good life would be when, with the passage of time, I grew older, a condition I earnestly wished to see come about. I was something like Philip Larkin, who had his first doubts about heaven upon hearing that there one would become a child again, when what he, Larkin, longed for was the prospect of adult life and feared being deprived of its perks, among them "money, keys, wallet, letters, books, long-playing records, drinks, the opposite sex, and other solaces of adulthood," and above all not having to deal any longer with children.

Time had a different feel when I was young. It felt, to begin with, much longer. Summers especially seemed lavish in their lengthiness. I can recall endless sunny summer days, when I was ten or eleven, playing a variant of baseball called line-ball on our gravelly school playground, with breaks for nickel-a-bottle grape soda drawn from an ice-laden metal case at Miller's School Store, days that seemed longer than entire fiscal quarters do now. Drives on vacations with my parents to

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visit relatives in Canada stretched out longer than reaching Mecca must have seemed to Sir Richard Burton. Events one looked forward to—the end of school term not least among them—took what felt like millennia to arrive. Now the minutes and often the hours move quite as slowly as then. It is, alas, only the months, years, even decades that rush by.

Sorry to strike so downbeat a note so early, but the difference between time now and time when I was young is the prospect of death. Not that I was ever ignorant of death, but I was rather better at keeping thoughts of it at bay. I still don't have the attention span to brood about it for very long, but it does keep bobbing up in my stream of consciousness, like some rusty, jagged tin can that blights the otherwise fairly clear waters of my thought. By the time one reaches forty, unless one is a very great fool, one realizes that one is no longer playing with anything like a fully loaded shot-clock, to take a trope from the National Basketball Association. By fifty, despite all the cheerful talk about expanded life spans, it is better to assume that one is already playing in overtime.

I don't think myself a dark character, but I have always assumed that I could be taken out of the game at any time through death by heart attack, cancer, plane crash, car accident, falling object, choking on food, murder, or by any other more or less painful, ignominious, or tragicomic mode of departure. In whatever manner the ugly Customer arrives, I hope that, upon greeting him, I shall have the strength to be ticked off by his appearance—and ticked, as the kids say, to the max. But when he shows up I don't think I shall be surprised. I have been expecting him for years.

Much in the way I live is based on I won't say a bargain—he doesn't make deals—but an attempt to stall off the ugly Customer. I quit smoking when I did, some thirteen years ago, chiefly because I would have thought myself silly, really quite embarrassed, to have to leave life seven or eight years earlier than scheduled because of the small but real pleasures of the weed. I restrain the glutton in myself for much the same reason. I try to work efficiently so that I can get the most out of myself, in good part because I should feel an idiot on my deathbed knowing that, in this regard as doubtless in many another, I had blown it by wasting time.

T. S. Eliot, himself obsessed by time, famously noted:

> Time present and time past
> Are both perhaps present in time future,
> And time future contained in time past.
> If all time is eternally present
> All time is unredeemable.

I am betting otherwise. I am living as if I can redeem time; or, perhaps more precisely, redeem myself in the time left to me by pressing for more time and hoping to make the most of what portion of this abstract but clearly precious commodity remains to me.

Some people appear to live with very little consciousness of time, and a part of me admires them, as one tends to admire those who can do a great many of the things one cannot oneself do. They do not feel themselves chased, hounded, under a strong obligation to keep glancing up at the clock. Other people pretend to ignore time: dressing younger than their years, indulging (sorry for this language of moral disapproval, but I cannot control myself) in the fantasy that time hasn't really touched them, never permitting time to enter into their calculations or even into the assumptions behind their lives. Many of both sorts of people live by the principle of free fall, do not plan beyond next week, don't even wear a watch. They should only live and be well, as the Jews used to say of the tsar, but not too close to me.

I, very differently, factor time into everything I do. Any day that I sleep past 6:00 A.M. I consider very near a lost day. Want to set me on the road to flip city? Change my time zone, steal my watch, keep the exact hour from me? I should crack, crumble, tell you the combination of the safe containing the diamonds, reveal where the secret weapons are hidden, anything you want to know—if only you will let me know what time it is. I am one of those people who think digital clocks a swell invention, because I like to know to the minute what time it is when I awake at night. The well-lit digital clock—now here is real progress, at least for those among us who are sufficiently compulsive, and to be compulsive, I have generally found, is sufficient unto itself.

This sense of being haunted by time was not something I grew up with. I don't believe I owned my first wristwatch until I went off to

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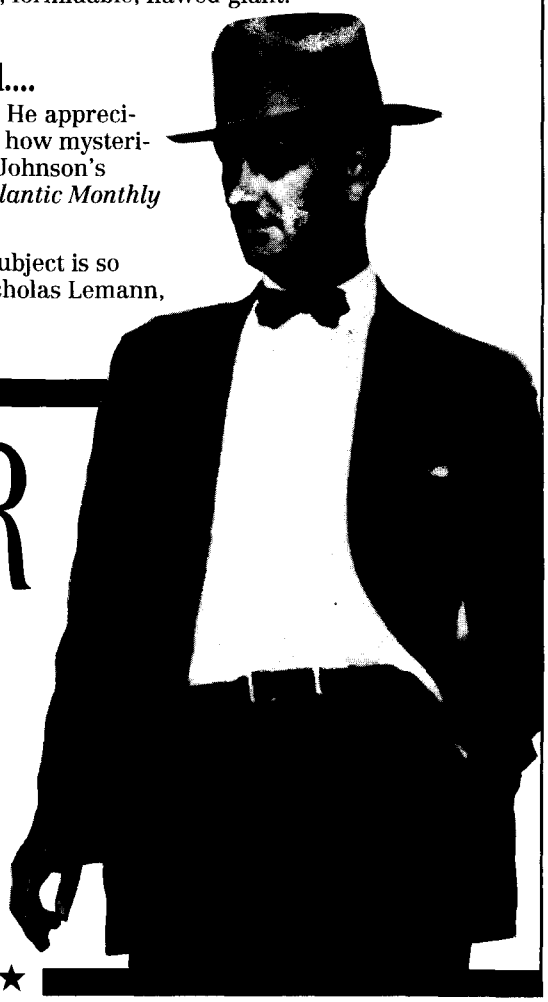

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college. Before then time was not something that seemed to press upon me; light and dark was all I needed to know. This first watch was a round-faced Bulova, which showed its innards through its crystal, and was given to me by my father. Watches have become a great status symbol in our day. *Town & Country*, *Vanity Fair*, *Connoisseur*, and other of the high-glitz magazines must be able to pay the rent and the printer with the advertisements they run for watches. Rolex watches are high on the list of stealables—if there can be "collectables," why not stealables—being easily fenced. Truman Capote, I seem to recall, used to buy wafer-thin watches for his friends. He would doubtless have been appalled by the coarseness of my rectangular Seiko, but I can live with such criticism both here and from beyond the grave. I don't look to my wrist for my status, for one thing; and, for another, I am already on a tight enough schedule not to worry about owning a watch that loses a minute or so every few years, especially since I feel I myself lose hours, days, whole weeks in indolence, serious sloth, and diversions cunningly self-devised.

Just who set up this schedule for me is far from clear. But once I had determined, however roughly, what it was I wanted to do in life, the schedule went quietly, inexorably into effect. "To produce some little exemplary works of art is my narrow and lowly dream," wrote Henry James, another man on a schedule, to his friend Grace Norton. My own dream, to be sure, was a good bit lower and narrower than Henry James's, but I did know that I wanted to get a good deal of writing done, and I didn't want to be one of those writers who are always complaining about how painful writing is in defense of their own small output. But before I could put my own schedule into effect I had first to learn how to write and then to discover what it was I wished to write. Perhaps it was because it took me so long to get these little prerequisites out of the way—I was nearly forty when they were—that the feeling of the clock always running, of time ticking away, of the gun about to go off continues to haunt me.

By a schedule I do not mean anything all that specific: 11:00–11:10 A.M., author free, that sort of thing. Instead I have in mind the sense that certain things ought to be done by certain ages, that if time is truly money, as the adage has it, then it ought not to be wasted, damn it. If you think of yourself as a writer, then by thirty you ought to have published a book, which, by the way, I hadn't. You have the summer off from teaching, you ought to have something to show for it by autumn: essays, stories, pages of a new book. Thinking or reading is not good enough. (Whenever I come across a politician or business executive who, when written up in the press, mentions that one of his hobbies is reading, I invariably mutter, so, too, is one of my hobbies reading—and another is breathing.) If you are on a schedule, it's not good enough, either, simply to enjoy yourself. Not that enjoyment is disallowed, or breaks, or even holidays precluded. But the schedule must be met. No pain, no gain; no work, you're a jerk.

I had a friend, an intelligent and very learned man, who gave no hint of having been in the least troubled by time. He was a university teacher, who taught well but scarcely bothered to publish. After his retirement from teaching, the one mild pressure in his life, meeting with his classes, was removed. He rose, read the daily press with a mordant eye, watched one of the morning television talk shows with his second cup of coffee, drew a bit, read some, taught himself (slowly) the rudiments of Chinese, wrote comic letters, looked up French words, considered etymologies of English ones, gave delight to his friends, took pleasure in his food and drink, and thus lived out his days until a benevolent (or so it seems in retrospect) heart attack took him out of what seemed a not very taxing game. It seems rather pointless to say of him, may he rest in peace, since, as near as I can determine, he pretty much lived in peace. I'm not sure he owned a watch. Not a man, clearly, on a schedule.

Did he, I have often wondered, have any doubts? Had he got the most out of himself? In suppressing ambition, did he not also kill a certain kind of joy—that very genuine joy connected with achievement? He left no children. His friends, those who have not already died, grow old. His memory will fairly soon be extinguished. He was too clever a man not to have thought about all this. He lived, if not all that intensely, still almost entirely in the *now*. He met all his obligations, not least among them giving pleasure to his friends, though apparently he never felt that he owed any obligations to the future. Was he more or less intelligent than I in eschewing the notion of a schedule?

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I wish I had the answer to that question, but even if it were that my friend was right and I am wrong, it is too late for me to change. When it comes to time, I am in the condition of a miser whose money is in gold dust in a large sack that has a hole he cannot find. I do not mean to say that I am incapable of leisure—of enjoying the hills of Tuscany, the seacoast of Maine; of languishing, drink in hand, in lengthy whimsical talk with friends—for I am not, but I do view myself as entitled to such delights only if I produce in sufficient measure to have earned it. What after all is the point of being compulsive if you don't feel yourself compelled, and most of the time? In saying this I suppose I resemble the writer La Harpe, of whom Chamfort said that he "hid his vices behind his faults." But the plain fact is that there isn't much I can do about my condition with respect to time. Do older, well-to-do Jewish women drive Japanese cars? Do surrealists use dental floss? Does the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton have an office pool for the Super Bowl? All of these things go against nature. Asking me to ease up would go against mine.

If anything, I feel time pressing down harder, more insistently than ever. Among the things I feel lost to me is what I believe is nowadays called turnaround time. The city magazine in my town—like so many magazines devoted to consumer interests that inform readers of the ten best places to get creole gum balls, the eight best used phylactery shops in town, and the five most efficient hospitals to go to for a double lobotomy—recently ran a piece about people who made radical career changes when well into middle age. There was the scientist who became a sculptor, the secretary who became a journalist, the small businessman who became a chef, the lawyer who became a filmmaker, the nurse who became a lawyer, the chiropodist who became a commodities trader . . . you get the drift. True, the chef has a wife who is a professor at a prominent business school, but let us not get caught up in details. The piece is titled "Awakenings," and its point is that life is infinitely expandable, filled with practically endless possibilities, and that there is time enough—for everything. Do you believe this? If you do, I know where there is some chiropractic equipment that I could arrange to get you cheap.

I don't believe it, not for a single valuable moment. The clock is running, Reuben, and if you don't believe it you are making a serious mistake. In the National Football League they sometimes speak of a man dropping a pass because "he heard footsteps," by which they mean that he heard the heavy tread of a bruising defensive player about to crunch him once he caught the pass. I do not hear footsteps but the tickings, the endless tickings, of a clock in my head. I am running what, in the same league, they call a two-minute drill, playing against the clock. I have no urge to mount a motorcycle and head for the coast, to sail the Atlantic alone with the woman I love and a complete set of the Great Books in our cabin. I am too old to change careers—even if I wanted to, which I don't—too old to have a mid-life crisis, though I must confess that, even at mid-life, which must have passed some while back, I never felt the need for one. I am too old even to change my hairstyle—and consider myself fortunate to have enough hair left at my age to be able to reject the possibility.

Now in my middle fifties, I realize that I am not chronologically old; nor do I feel spiritually old. But the determining factor here is that I happen to view my life not as malleable material, to be shaped and reshaped as often as the mood or the time-spirit takes me, but as a work of art—possibly, I grant you, a botched one—that I have been putting together for more than half a century and am not about to abandon now. I have it in mind to end my days reading Tacitus and contemplating the astonishing vagaries of human nature, and not running in the old codgers' marathon and dancing the boogaloo that same evening at Gay Nineties Night at the home for the especially fit, even if slightly gaga, elderly.

I realize that I am unlikely to make anything like serious philosophical penetration into the mysteries of time, and it would be silly to waste much of my time (or yours) in attempting to do so. Not even Saint Augustine felt himself at ease in these turbulent intellectual waters. "What is time?" he famously asks in *The Confessions*. "I know what it is if no one asks me what it is; but if I want to explain it to someone who has asked me, I find that I do not know." It was Saint Augustine who claimed that his soul was "on fire to solve this very complicated enigma," and confessed that, on this subject, it was "a bad state indeed to be in, not even to know what it is that I do

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not know!" In Book XI of *The Confessions*, Saint Augustine makes many an elegant formulation and cuts many a fine distinction, yet finally concludes that the impressions that things leave in the mind form the measure of time—that time, essentially, is in one's mind. This does not seem very satisfactory, except for the inconvenient fact that it also seems true.

It seems true because it accounts for the duality of time—its strict measurability on the one hand, and on the other its highly variable measure in our minds, so that there are hours that feel like days and days that, in retrospect, feel like an hour. It is the intrinsic irrationality of time within the extrinsically most strict system of rationality that gives time its (almost) endless fascination. The invention that is needed to take account of this duality, obviously, is a clock that measures both real and psychological time. Details would need to be worked out, of course, but it seems to me that such a clock would measure how long certain dull lectures and dreary dinner parties *really* are.

The psychological measure of time would be extremely important if one knew precisely how much of it one had left. A common fantasy, surely, is that of being told that one has, say, six months to live. How, if one could get around and function normally, would one spend the time? The trick, I should think, would be to find ways of doing the things that one enjoys most, which almost always make time pass all too quickly, but under conditions in which time passes very slowly. I, for example, would eat chocolate-covered orange peels, which seems to take no time at all, but only at laundromats, where time hangs so heavily.

That is no example, you say, that is an absurdity. But then, I would rejoin, so, often, is time, with its mixture of the real and the unreal. Consider age. Someone once said that, early in life, a woman decides whether she will live as if she is either eighteen or eighty, and then, having decided, sticks with her decision throughout her life. Something to it. I lock in friends at certain ages, and then am astonished to learn that they have become—who'd have thunk it—senior bloody citizens. The lives of certain writers have been built upon the assumption that they will always be at ages they have long since passed. The novelist Norman Mailer's entire career, with its attraction to violence and let-'er-rip, leaping-off-the-high-dive sex, assumes a man in his late thirties, early forties, tops, not the white-haired, potbellied little *zaydeh* Mailer has become. John Updike has always seemed the too-sensitive sixteen-year-old, Philip Roth the unpleasant wise guy at nineteen, John Irving about fourteen. Best, probably, for a writer to allow a bit of slack in his style to accommodate the distinct possibility of arthritis and collecting Social Security.

Much of this aspect of time has to do with how one regards oneself. One of the hallmarks of our time is that people want to seem as youthful as possible for as long as possible. Some occupations encourage this, some discourage it. What man who as a boy was interested in sports is not taken aback when he first hears an athlete ten or so years younger than he described as "a wily veteran" or "over the hill"? Careers in sports are much under the tyranny of time. Academic careers permit one to remain as young, even childish, as one wishes, almost up to the grave. Professors who went to graduate school in the 1960s or early 1970s, though now themselves in their forties or fifties, dress largely as their students do. They wear jeans, tote backpacks, don't think much about haircuts. Many of them, for all I know, may wish to be buried in denim, a Sony Walkman plugged into their ears (extremely long-playing batteries, I trust, included). "There is," writes Milan Kundera in his novel *Immortality*, "a certain part of all of us that lives outside time. Perhaps we become aware of our age only at exceptional moments and most of the time we are ageless." I suspect that this is probably true for most people, though I know it isn't true for me.

As for me, I have begun to conclude that I have the gift of perpetual middle age. I at any rate think it a gift. I hope it is as perpetual as such things are permitted to be, and I know that I am now middle-aged chronologically as well as spiritually. I rather like being middle-aged. I feel in this regard like Henry James, who wrote to a friend: "I like growing old: fifty-six!—but I don't like growing *older*. I quite love my present age and the compensations, simplifications, freedom, independences, memories, advantages of it. But I don't keep it long enough—it passes too quickly." Just so. How to slow things down, that seems to me the question. Living all one's life in laundromats or listening to commence-

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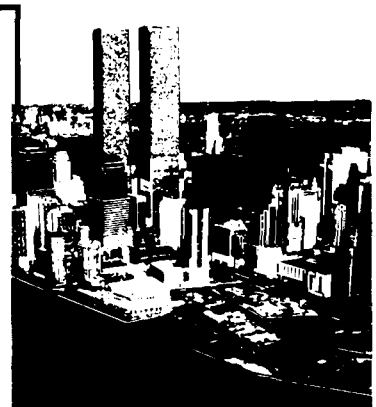

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ment addresses delivered by the prime minister of Sweden—a little time stopper I recently underwent—doesn't seem to me quite the solution.

One of the habits of the middle-aged (and above) that I have had for a number of years now is, when the newspaper arrives, going first to the obituaries. Ezra Pound said that literature is news that stays news; the same is true about death, which also stays news; and I have long found the obituaries the most interesting and important item in the papers. Each morning I turn to them looking for—what? In part for notification of the death of the famous, the death of enemies, the element of surprise that someone whom one thought long dead was until the day before still alive, the shock of youthful death through AIDS. All these items the obituary columns supply in part.

I also like to read the obituaries for a sense of averages and hence of probabilities. I prefer it when there are six or seven deaths of persons in their nineties: a lawyer who worked at NATO, an Italian archaeologist, a monsignor, an ex-judge, a woman who danced for Diaghilev. One hopes—against hope—that these are all people who were able to slip off the earth without first raising the yellow flag of senility. I cannot remember her last name, but a few years ago I was much touched by the brief obituary notice of a woman whose first name was Lily, a lepidopterist who had discovered and named a butterfly and who died—perhaps here the euphemisms "passed away" or "expired" for once apply—at one hundred years old. Lovely Lily, may you rest in a gentle place where perhaps a butterfly will sense your originality and rename you.

Quite as often the obituary pages contain news of men and women my age and younger who have been taken out of the game by cancer and heart attack. Then one's own heartbeat feels a bit irregular, one's respiration a touch jumpy, one begins to worry about that minuscule lump just below the wrist. "Identification," the boys in the head trades call it, but the more precise phrase is "fear of death." My late friend Erich Heller used to say that he was not afraid of death; it was only dying that had him worried. He died, in his sleep, mercifully, his heart having given out; it would be helpful if he could let me know that he was correct not to fear death. Hazlitt, who after a hard life filled with disappointment pegged out at fifty-two, thought that "in reflecting on death generally, we mix up the idea of life with it, and thus make it the ghastly monster that it is." As always with Hazlitt, nicely said.

Hazlitt felt that the fear of death was tied to the loss of religious belief; he thought that a life of action and danger modified the fear of death; and he knew from personal experience that "sedentary and studious men are the most apprehensive" about death, and he cites Dr. Johnson here as a case in point. As for himself, Hazlitt said that he would rather hang around until he saw "some prospect of good to mankind, such as my life began with" (a reference to the French Revolution); left "some sterling work behind me"; and "have some friendly hand consign me to the grave." Well, before his life was over Hazlitt had achieved one out of three of his wishes. In baseball as in life, .333 ain't bad.

Hazlitt wrote "On the Fear of Death," the essay in which these observations appear, in his early forties. As young as that, he began to feel the dreamy quality of life. This, too, may be owing to the sedentary and studious life, but for some while life for me as well has seemed shadowy, a dream, a luscious sleep from which I don't quite wish to be wakened but from which I await a terrifying alarm to signal that it is over and that the warm bed must be evacuated to make room for the next dreamer. The imprecision of memory has added greatly to this dreamy feeling. The older I become, the less strong my memory for time, except for the years of my boy- and young manhood, which become more and more vivid to me. But I now frequently find myself misplacing four-, five-, even six-year clumps of my life. "Didn't we go to Greece seven or so years ago?" I ask. It turns out to have been thirteen years ago. "Weren't you a student in my class four years ago?" It turns out to have been eight. Have I met that man before? Did I once give a lecture in Ohio? When was it that I owned an olive-drab–colored suit? Lost, all of it, in that wash of time which the poet all too rightly referred to as its "dark backward and abysm."

Two of the greatest problems time provides (neither of which I have a solution for) are how to slow it down and how to make it seem less the stuff of dreams. One of the reasons I keep a journal is to prevent, in howsoever small a way, life from seeming a dream; by recording what has happened to me, no matter

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how trivial, I feel that I have somehow made it real. Written out, it has been salvaged, plucked from the Heraclitean river, or so at least I have come to believe. This is a fine prescription for graphomania, I grant you, and of course writing in a journal takes time, which is another problem.

Eating and sleeping also take time—and how I admire those fortunate people who need only four or five hours of sleep each night!—and so does everything else, including getting one's watch fixed. The odd thing about my own life is that it would seem to be nicely set up to save time. I rise early—usually at 4:45 in the morning. I do not travel to work on buses or subways or fight freeway traffic in my car. I have taken a pledge never to jog. I do not golf, I read no detective fiction. From all appearances my life seems a lean, mean, time-saving machine.

Yet I notice that the least disruption often shoots my day. If, say, I have to go downtown for an appointment with a dentist or an accountant or to meet a friend for lunch, poof! wham! it's gone. Lunches with friends, which I much enjoy, are especially effective at killing afternoons. (Henry James called lunch, because it interrupted his work, that "matutinal monster," and whenever possible he did without it.) Yet other people seem to spend three hours getting to and from work, are able to shop around during the day, go to great numbers of meetings, have leisurely lunches, carry on love affairs, and still find time to do the *New York Times* crossword puzzle.

Or is it only that the clock always seems to be running slower in the other fellow's pocket? Are we not all under the tyranny of time? Aldous Huxley, in a newspaper column written in the 1930s, claimed that industrialization, with railroads, factories, and machines at its center, is what has placed us under this tyranny. "For a modern American or Englishman," he wrote, "waiting is a psychological torture." It was not always and everywhere thus, according to Huxley, and not to him alone. Even the concept of the week, a unit of seven days, with a Sabbath day at its end, is perhaps fewer than two thousand years old. The claim made by those who wish to return to simpler times—not to set back but to throw away the clock—is that in attending so fastidiously to seconds and minutes, while locked into these man-made, entirely artificial distinctions of time, we forgo the great sweeps, the grandeur of time presented by the course of the moon and stars, the changing of the seasons, the larger rhythms of life itself.

Not so long ago it used to be said that they ordered these things better in the Orient, where people were not so time-bound as we in the West. Ah, the mysterious East, where waiting is not a concept, but a way of life. Russians, too, are said to be famously untouched by time, or at any rate never feel their style crimped by the need for punctuality. Invite a Russian to lunch, he might show up for dessert and coffee at that evening's dinner. Blacks, among themselves, joke about CPT, or colored people's time. But for those white-eyes among us, as the Indians in old Western movies used to refer to cowboys, cavalry troops, and settlers, the clock keeps running, the sand continues to dribble down, the timekeeper's pistol is poised in the air. For us time has become an obstacle that we try to overcome by living at even greater speed—in the hope, I suppose, of lapping ourselves in the race of life. I do not mock this; I am in the race myself.

As one of the country's leading solipsists, I am pleased to learn that I am not alone in this feeling that time seems out of control, whirring by, regardless of all attempts to make the best of it. A psychologist named John P. Robinson, who directs something called the "Americans' Use of Time Project" at the University of Maryland, reports that Americans today generally feel more harried, even during a period when free time in American life has actually increased. Professor Robinson defines free time as time when people do not have to attend to work, family, errands and chores, or such personal needs as eating, sleeping, and grooming. Married women with children are said to feel this harried condition more acutely than other groups, but almost everyone feels rushed, frenzied, and finally defeated in his or her efforts to make the best use of time. "We are at a point," Professor Robinson is quoted in the *New York Times* as saying, "when the value of time to most Americans is reaching parity with the value of money."

We speak of killing time, but in fact time is killing us. Even leisure has become time-haunted, tinged with anxiety, as people struggle to sneak in time for a run, sail, swim, walk, ski, workout, couple of sets of tennis, nine holes of golf. Don't forget all the paintings one

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hasn't seen, books one hasn't read, music one hasn't heard, not to mention those one wants to find time to see, read, and hear at least once again before the big sleep. Let us not speak of the countries one has not yet seen, mountains not climbed, rivers never crossed. Once more around the Louvre, this time perhaps not so lightly. "Hurry up please it's time," announces the barman in "The Waste Land." "Hurry up please it's time."

"Slow down," some anonymous genius once declared, "you're in a hurry." What splendid advice! Of course, life has its own way of slowing us down. As Chamfort noted: "The intensity of absolute pleasures, as metaphysicists say, diminishes with time. Yet time apparently increases relative pleasures; and I suspect that this is the artifice by which nature has been able to bind men to life." Not for everyone, apparently. Yeats claimed that "one never tires of life, and at the last must die of thirst with the cup at one's lips." But then Yeats must have known that a life beyond his own days, in posterity, was guaranteed him through his magnificent poetry. Great art, heroic or evil action on a large enough scale—these are among the things that will put one beyond time, that will make one immortal.

It would calm one down a good deal, I should think, to give up all dreams of immortality. Yet nearly everyone must believe that he has some claim on posterity and hence some long shot at immortality. "Posterity will know as little of me as I shall know of posterity," said W. S. Gilbert (of the team of Gilbert and Sullivan), wrongly. Even Heraclitus, the philosopher of flux, who was known as the "weeping philosopher," presumably because he felt that everything in the world changed, dissolved, or vanished, even he in the midst of the demon flux, belied his own theory, and his name has lived long enough for me to bandy it around today.

One lives out one's days, hoping and dreaming against the shockingly bad odds that something that one or one's children will do might cause one's name to live on, making one immortal: by committing an act of great kindness or courage, by being the recipient of immense good luck, by producing an imperishable book, painting, or musical composition. To be immortal, to live out of the touch of time—is that too much to ask? If only I could be assured of it, I could relax, knock off early, put my feet up on the desk, have a couple of chocolate-covered orange peels, look at my watch, and smile. No hurry at all. But until then there are deadlines, real and imagined, to meet; miles to go before I sleep; and the hope that the knock at the door isn't the ugly Customer but the guy from Federal Express.

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Commencement at Duke

GEORGE F. WILL

COMMENCEMENT SPEAKERS OFTEN SAY, somberly, that graduates are bidding good-bye to campus tranquillity and entering the real world's turbulence. But lately some of society's stresses have come to campuses, including this one. Duke's Class of 1991 can be forgiven for feeling that, in recent years, the ivory tower has been topped by battlements. So deservedly great is Duke's stature, its disputes resonate far beyond its broad lawns. Indeed, there is, in several senses, a national interest in the great debate, in which Duke partakes, concerning academic policies.

So today I want to tread, gingerly, onto that dark and bloody ground. I do so respectfully. I am a former professor, and the son of one. I am respectful of this magnificent institution, which has earned its eminence. And I am respectful of the complexity of the academic disputes that have, of late, enlivened life at Duke and elsewhere.

The adjective *academic* is often used as a dismissive synonym for *inconsequential*, as in the phrase "the point is of only academic interest." And it is often said that the bitterness of academic politics is inversely proportional to the stakes—that what happens on campuses does not much matter "out there" in the "real" world. But history is the history of mind; you are what you read; ideas have consequences—indeed, only ideas have lasting consequences. Therefore, the quality of our national life reflects, after a short lag, the quality of thinking on campuses.

Conditions on some campuses call to mind the tombstone in a rural English churchyard, which contains the simple six-word epitaph: "I told you I was sick." Duke is not sick. The vigor of its arguments suggests not anemia but robustness. Indeed, it has been your good fortune, you of the class of 1991, to be present here for arguments that clarify the nature not only of the academic enterprise but also of the American experiment.

Every sermonette, such as mine here, should pick some cogent thought to construe. My text today comes from a great giver of advice, the poet Robert Frost, who once said: "Don't join too many gangs. Join few

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if any. Join the United States and join the family—but not much in between unless a college."

That advice, like the man who proffered it, is quintessentially American. It is very American in its general injunction in favor of individualism and against excessive joining—against defining oneself too much by group affiliations. But it also is especially American in its inclusion of an institution of higher education, along with family and nation, in a trinity of essential allegiances.

Why did Frost do that? Because universities are entrusted with nothing less than a task central to America's identity and success. Theirs is the task of transmitting the best of the West—the culture of our civilization—to successive generations who will lead America, which is the most successful expression of that civilization.

We are, as Lincoln said at Gettysburg, a nation "dedicated to a proposition." There is a high idea-content to American citizenship. It is a complicated business, being an American. We are all like Jay Gatsby—made up, by ourselves. But we are not made up of randomly aggregated moral and intellectual materials. Rather, we are made up of moral and intellectual resources that have been winnowed by time and must be husbanded by universities.

By decisions about what schools should do—about what we should study and read—we define our polity. This is why America's primary and secondary schools have always been cockpits of religious and ethnic conflicts.

What is now occurring on campuses is an episode in the unending American drama of adjusting the rights of the individual and the rights of the community. Individuals have a broad right to study and teach what they wish—up to a point. (I shall return to that four-word phrase—"up to a point.") That point is set, in part, by the community's right to perpetuate itself.

Lincoln said: "A house divided against itself cannot stand." It is equally true that a society unaware of itself—with no consensus about its premises and purposes—cannot endure. In Lincoln's day, a collision of two clear and diametrically opposed premises nearly proved fatal to America. Today there is a potentially fatal idea in circulation. It is the idea that there should not be in this pluralistic society any core culture passed on from generation to generation.

To those who say we are threatened by a suffocating "hegemony" of Western civilization's classic works, I say: If only that were the problem! The real danger is not cultural hegemony but cultural amnesia, and the concomitant Balkanization of the life of the mind.

I just used a verb derived from a proper noun, the verb "to Balkanize." That verb was born of the sorrows of the Balkan nations in that

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unhappy European region where, it was said, more history was produced than could be consumed locally. The First World War, and hence most of this century's horrors, began in the Balkans, where fragmentation was contagious.

Today there is ample evidence of the Balkanization of America's intellectual life. This Balkanization begins with the assertion that any syllabus composed of traditional classics of Western civilization will "underrepresent" certain groups—racial, sexual, ethnic, or class-based groups.

Well, are the great works of Western civilization primarily products of social elites? Yes, of course—for many reasons, including the fact that these works come to us from centuries where literacy itself was an elite attainment. But it is fallacious to argue that therefore these works perpetuate an oppressiveness that allegedly is the essence of Western civilization.

Some people who fancy themselves intellectually emancipated—who think themselves liberated from what they call a stultifying cultural inheritance—are, in fact, far from free. They actually reside in "the clean, well-lit prison of one idea." Today's imprisoning idea is philosophically primitive and empirically insupportable. It is that any humanities text merely "reflects" its social context and thus should be read as a political document.

Too often the meaning of the crucial word *reflects* disappears in a mist of imprecision. Usually the assertion that a text "reflects" its context is either trivially true or flagrantly false. It is trivially true if it means only that the text, like its author, stands in some relation to the setting in which the author wrote. But it is false if it means that any text should be construed politically, with politics understood crudely as mere power relations of domination and subordination in the era in which the author wrote.

Such thinking causes the study of literature to become a subdivision of political history and to be studied as sociology. This reduction of the arts to social sciences is reverse alchemy—turning gold into lead.

This is the result of the imprisoning idea that the nature of everything, from intellectual works to political acts, is determined by race, gender, and class. Alas, any single idea purporting to be a universal explanation, a comprehensive simplifier of social complexities, requires its adherents to be simple, and makes them so. Today's dubious idea also makes its adherents condescending—and worse.

It is condescending and deeply anti-democratic when intellectuals consign blacks, or women, or ethnics, or the working class, or whomever, to confining categories, asserting that they can be fully understood as mere "reflections" of their race, sex, or class, and that members of those

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groups have the limited "consciousness" supposedly characteristic of those groups.

The root of this mischief is the assertion—the semantic fiat—that everything is political. If the word *political* is promiscuously used to describe any choice or judgment involving values, then *political* becomes a classification that does not classify. One cannot say it too emphatically: Not all value judgments are political judgments.

It is not a political judgment that certain works have contributed mightily to the making of our civilization and hence must be known if we are to know ourselves. It is not a political judgment that certain books have demonstrated the power, down the generations, to instruct us in history, irony, wit, tragedy, pathos, and delight. Education is an apprenticeship in those civilized—and civilizing—passions and understandings, and not all texts are equal as teachers.

We must husband our highest praise, as Karl Marx did. Marx celebrated the art of Greek antiquity, not because it had a proletarian origin—it did not—but because it met—indeed, set—standards that transcend any particular class or culture.

The legacy of Western thought is a mind capable of comprehending and valuing other cultures while avoiding the nihilism that says all cultures are incommensurable and hence all of equal merit.

Sensible people rejoice at any chance to study another culture's Rousseau or Cervantes or Dickens. But education is too serious a matter to become a game of let's pretend, a ritual of pretending that enduring works of the humanities are evenly distributed throughout the world's cultures.

We want to be able imaginatively to enter, and to empathize with, other cultures. But we must live in our own. And our own is being injured by some academic developments that impede understanding.

We see on campuses the baneful habit of joining what Robert Frost would have considered too many gangs—and the wrong sorts of gangs. We see the spread of intellectual gerrymandering, carving up curricula into protected enclaves for racial, sexual, and ethnic groups. Often this is done on the condescending premise that members of these groups have only a watery individuality—that they have only derivative identities, derived from membership in victim groups.

The premise of this analysis is that Western civilization has a disreputable record consisting primarily of oppression and exploitation—that Western civilization has been prolific only at producing victims.

That idea leads, in turn, to the patronizing notion that members of a victim group are disadvantaged unless taught by members of their own group and unless they study works by group members. Otherwise (or so

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the theory goes) members of the group will lack self-esteem, an attribute which is presumed to be a precondition for, not a result of, achievement. This sort of thinking promotes envy, resentment, suspicion, aggression, self-absorption, and, ultimately, separatism.

It is a crashing non sequitur to say that because America is becoming more diverse, university curricula must be Balkanized. Actually, America's increasing diversity increases the importance of universities as transmitters of the cultural legacy that defines and preserves national unity.

Some policies advanced today in the name of "diversity" might better be associated with a less agreeable word—"fragmentation."

Some policies instituted in the name of "multiculturalism" are not celebrations of the pluralism from which American unity is woven. Some of these policies are capitulations: they involve withdrawal from the challenge of finding, and teaching, common ground on which Americans can stand together—not the little patches of fenced-off turf for irritable groups, but the common ground of citizenship in the nation, which is one of the good gangs of which Robert Frost spoke.

Many of today's Balkanizing policies are products of a desire to show sensitivity to the feelings of particular groups. Sensitivity is a good thing. But, remember: the four most important words in political discourse are "up to a point." Armies, police, taxation, even freedom and equality are good only "up to a point."

In the context of today's campus disputes, sensitivity, too, is good—up to a point. What is not good is the notion that sensitivity about one's own opinions generates for oneself an entitlement not to be disagreed with or otherwise offended. Or that the only way to prove one's sensitivity is by subscribing to a particular political agenda.

Some critics complain that a traditional curriculum built around the canon of great works of the Western mind necessarily reinforces authority and docile acceptance of existing arrangements. But these critics, some of whom fancy themselves radicals, could take lessons in real radicalism from many of the writers of those classic works.

Virtually every subsequent radicalism was anticipated in Plato's inquiries. No person more radical than Machiavelli ever put pen to paper—Machiavelli, whose *The Prince* became the handbook for modern masterless men and women who are obedient only to rules they write for themselves.

Four years after *The Prince* was written, Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to a church door, asserting the primacy of private judgment—conscience. There is a golden thread of magnificent radicalism connecting that white German theologian to his namesake, the black American minister—a thread connecting Luther's 95 theses and Dr. King's "Letter from Birmingham Jail."

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Do not try to tell the deposed tyrants of Eastern Europe that the study of the central figures of American civilization inculcates subordination to the status quo. Europe's recent revolutions against tyranny were fueled by the words of American presidents, particularly the third and sixteenth, Jefferson and Lincoln.

There is today a warmhearted idea that every academic activity must contribute to the reforming of society by assuaging this or that group's grievances. This idea leads to fracturing the community into antagonistic groups; to the drowning of individuality in group thinking; to the competitive cultivation of group grievances; to the subordination of education to political indoctrination. In short, some good intentions produce bad educations.

Today's complacent judgment that American education is healthier than it seems is akin to Mark Twain's jest that Wagner's music is better than it sounds. Eight years ago a national commission stated, "For the first time in the history of our country, the education skills of one generation will not surpass, will not equal, will not even approach those of their parents." This disaster is, I think, partly a result of too much educational energy being invested in the pursuit of social goals, which, though arguably worthy, are undoubtedly peripheral to the main mission of schools.

Fortunately, we need not deplore the education that has been given to the portion of this generation that is privileged to be graduating from Duke. Embarrassing though the fact may be, it is a fact that you, the Class of '91, who may consider the word *elitist* an epithet, are, this day, certifiably of the elite. But let me assuage any uneasiness you may feel. Elitism—meaning a disproportionate role in government and society by small groups—is inevitable. The question for any society is not whether elites shall rule, but which elites shall rule. The problem for any democracy is to achieve consent to rule by suitable elites.

To produce suitable elites, universities need leaders with the confidence of Benjamin Jowett, who for many years was head of Oxford's Balliol College. Once when Jowett submitted a matter to a vote of Balliol's dons and was displeased with the result, he announced, "The vote is 22-to-2. I see we are deadlocked."

Jowett, like many great university statesmen, understood that a university cannot be a democracy, all sail and no anchor, blown about by gusts of opinion and fashion. It must be anchored in the convictions of intellectual leaders who are confident of their authority because they know they stand on the shoulders of giants—those great thinkers of whose legacy today's teachers are custodians and transmitters.

On March 4, 1861, with the fabric of America unraveling around him, Lincoln delivered his First Inaugural Address. In one of the most

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felicitous phrases in American rhetoric, he held out the hope that Americans would be summoned back to friendship by "the mystic chords of memory."

It is always thus: America is always dependent on its collective memory. And universities are keepers of that flame. Arguments about university curricula are not narrowly, crudely political, but they are, in an important sense, constitutional arguments: they concern how the American mind shall be constituted. And in a democracy, mind is all that ultimately matters, because everything rests on the shiftable sands of opinion.

That is why democracies are in permanent danger; and why it is prudent to be pessimistic—not fatalistic, not resigned to the worst, but pessimistic, alert to the dangers.

I subscribe to the "Ohio in 1895 Theory of History," so named, by me, for the obscure but illuminating fact that in 1895, in Ohio, there were just two automobiles—and they collided. The moral of the human story is that things go wrong more often than they go right because there are so many more ways to go wrong. Truths increase arithmetically; but errors increase exponentially. Most new ideas are false; hence most "improvements" make matters worse. That is why wise people are wary of intellectual fads and are respectful of the received greatness which, in academic context, is called the canon.

The nice part about being a pessimist is that you are constantly being either proven right or pleasantly surprised. Duke is one of life's pleasant surprises. As you have been passing through Duke, Duke has been passing through a fiery furnace of debate, and it, like you, is, like steel, stronger for having been tempered by the heat. That is why I predict special success for the class of 1991 and continued greatness for Duke.

My life around politics has taught me the hazards of making predictions. When I was at Oxford thirty years ago, the university press published volume three of Isaac Deutscher's biography of Trotsky, and the student Marxist Association had for Deutscher a party, which I infiltrated. There I heard Deutscher say—quite solemnly—this about Trotsky: "Proof of Trotsky's farsightedness is that none of his predictions have come true yet." Recurring predictions about the final ruin of America's universities have not come true yet and, I wager, never will.

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Craniology

SHULAMITH WECHTER CAINE

The study that deals with the size, shape, and other characteristics of human skulls.
—Random House Dictionary

It was a child's skull, small
as a kachina dancer's rattle,
and where the rest of the skeleton lay
was anybody's guess. The bones,
thin and pale as willow bark,
were loosely joined by seams of zigzag
tracery, like fancy quillwork
on an Anasazi cradle.

I photographed the skull and wrapped it
in white gauze, then laid it on a bed
of cotton in a cardboard box.
That night, I added in the margins
of my expedition journal
that I heard a moan from distant
cliff houses and that the gravid August
moon, rising above a ridge
of piñon trees, rolled like a hoop
across the sky.

Years later, I held
my infant son. Like a blessing
my fingers touched his head. I felt
the fontanel, the steady pulse,
his heart's iambic beat, and then
I named the bones, repeating "frontal,
temporal, occipital,
parietal," a kind of chant
to keep my child from harm.

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Scientific Fraud

DAVID GOODSTEIN

SCIENTIFIC FRAUD HAS BECOME a very hot topic. Most scientists have traditionally believed that fraud in science is rare or nonexistent, but today there are congressmen and journalists and others who think otherwise, and even some scientists are not entirely sure. Confusion arises because, except in the most extreme cases, no general agreement exists on what constitutes fraud or serious misconduct in science. Furthermore, the public's perception of what scientists do and why they do it is distorted by myths happily perpetrated by the scientists themselves, with the consequence that normal and even essential forms of behavior by scientists can be viewed as sinister by those searching for evidence of wrongdoing. And, of course, there are indeed real cases of fraud in science.

Perhaps the most famous incident of scientific fraud in this century was the case of Piltdown man—a human cranium and ape jaw that were found in a gravel pit in England in 1908 and 1912. Substantial academic reputations were made by discerning human characteristics in the jaw and ape characteristics in the cranium before this putative missing link was exposed as a fake in 1954. Another famous case was that of Sir Cyril Burt, a psychologist who worked on the heritability of intelligence by studying identical twins who were separated at birth and brought up in different environments. Unfortunately, there were very few cases of such convenient subjects for research, so Burt appears to have obligingly invented thirty-three more and further helped matters along by inventing two assistants to help him study them. Burt died in 1971, three years before evidence was uncovered that indicated it had all been a hoax.

In 1974 William Summerlin of the Memorial Sloan Kettering Center in New York was doing research that required nature to produce for him some rats with healthy black patches grafted on their skin. Since nature was not sufficiently cooperative, he helped her along with a black, felt-tip pen and was caught in the act. In another case, John Darsee, a prodigious young cardiologist at Harvard Medical School, was publish-

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ing approximately a hundred papers a year. Until he was caught red-handed fabricating data in 1981, it did not occur to anyone that with that rate of production maybe he didn't have time to do the actual experiments. In yet another case, Stephen Breuning made headlines in 1987 when it was revealed that he had fabricated data in his research at the University of Pittsburgh on the effects of psychoactive drugs in children.

The most recent notorious case involves the Nobel Prize-winning biologist David Baltimore, now president of Rockefeller University. A post-doctoral researcher named Margot O'Toole, without accusing anybody of fraud, claimed that the evidence did not support the conclusions in a paper written by Baltimore and a number of his collaborators. The events that ensued would have served nicely as a plot for Euripides. Baltimore used his immense prestige to rally the scientific community behind him, facing down investigations at two universities and in Congress. When evidence emerged that one of the authors, Tereza Imanishi-Kari, needing to substantiate what Baltimore was loudly declaiming, had fabricated data to shore up the case *after* the initial investigations, Baltimore still didn't back down, claiming that what she wrote in her notebooks was her private affair, so long as it wasn't published. This attitude, when it finally came out in the report of yet another investigation, shocked even Baltimore's staunchest supporters. The final act of this scientific drama is likely to be cathartic for science, and perhaps even satisfying to members of Congress.

The first serious congressional attention to scientific misconduct seems to have come in 1981 when the investigations subcommittee of the House Committee on Science and Technology was prompted to look into a Harvard Medical School case. Albert Gore, then representative and now Democratic senator from Tennessee, was chairman of the committee. Philip Handler, then president of the National Academy of Sciences, made a presentation to the committee in which he told them, more or less, that this was something beyond their understanding and that they should keep their grubby hands out of it. Handler's view was not exactly well received by Congress, whose members felt that the scientists, after all, were being supported by the public and ought to accept congressional oversight. Nevertheless, these hearings did not lead to any congressional action. During the early eighties, Orrin Hatch, Republican senator from Utah, started poking into the National Cancer Institute, also without permanent effect. But more recently and with greater publicity, two Democratic representatives, John Dingell of Michigan and Ted Weiss of New York, held hearings in their respective subcommittees on the Baltimore case. Dingell had inherited Gore's subcommittee on science and technology, and Weiss was head of the

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subcommittee on human resources and intergovernmental relations of the Government Operations Committee. Dingell's hearings had considerable influence, but they don't seem as yet to have produced any formal result. Last October, Weiss's committee issued a booklet containing an analysis of ten cases of scientific fraud entitled "Are Scientific Misconduct and Conflict of Interest Hazardous to Our Health?" The booklet is especially critical of the universities for their handling of these cases. The committee report was not well received in the press, which pointed out that it was based largely on an analysis of cases that had occurred in the early 1980s, and that much has changed since then. The report seems to have dropped out of sight.

Meanwhile, at the National Institutes of Health, two staff biologists named Ned Feder and Walter Stewart set themselves up as a kind of self-appointed truth squad. According to their critics, they had not been very productive scientists and were trying to find a way of holding on to their laboratory and office space. They hit upon the fraud issue and were particularly visible in the Baltimore case. In other cases, too, they have become the point team for whistle blowers. Feder and Stewart now have official permission from their superiors to spend a certain percentage of their time pursuing wrongdoers.

In 1988 and 1989, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Science Foundation (NSF) each published in the *Federal Register* formal sets of regulations regarding scientific fraud. These two sets of regulations, many pages long, are virtually identical. Both of them call on the university (if the fraud has been committed at a university) to investigate the situation first and only later to hand it over to the agency. A rule was declared late in 1989 by the Public Health Service (PHS), the parent organization of NIH, stating that after January of 1990 no research proposal would be accepted from any university that did not certify that it had in place a formal set of regulations about how to handle research fraud. Suddenly, every research university in the country had to have a formal set of regulations for dealing with scientific misconduct. An Office of Scientific Integrity (OSI) has been established within NIH. The NSF does not yet have such an office, but they have an Inspector General who would seem at first glance to serve much the same function. However, it turns out that the staff of the new OSI see themselves in a different and somewhat surprising light.

In the spring of 1991, after a year's operation, OSI took its show on the road to address the wider academic community and to assess the year's work. In Seattle, where I saw them, the theme of their presentation was, we're the friendly folks from OSI, and we're here to help you. "The question," said Dr. Jules Hallum, director of OSI, "is, can science police itself?" By that he meant, can the job be done by OSI. The staff of

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OSI are nearly all Ph.D. scientists, and they see themselves not as a part of the government bureaucracy but as part of the scientific community. Coincidentally, it was during the same week as the Seattle meeting that news broke about the OSI investigation that finally undermined Baltimore's defenses.

At the Seattle meeting (where the audience was largely scientists-turned-administrators from West Coast universities), as at the earlier Washington, D.C., meeting (where the audience had mostly been D.C. lawyers), the most contentious issue that arose concerned the types of misconduct sufficiently serious to warrant OSI attention. In fact, OSI is careful not to use the word *fraud* at all, preferring instead the term *scientific misconduct*, defined in the Final Rule issued by the PHS as: "fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, or other practices that seriously deviate from those that are commonly accepted within the scientific community for proposing, conducting and reporting research."

By contrast, the regulations from my university, Caltech (to take a random example), define research fraud (purposely broader than scientific fraud) as "serious misconduct with intent to deceive, for example, faking data, plagiarism or misappropriation of ideas." There are two distinctions to note here. First, OSI steers clear of saying *fraud* because it doesn't want cases hung up on proving intent to deceive, an essential ingredient of fraud, whereas the Caltech rules assume that in such offenses as faking data, plagiarism, and misappropriation of ideas, intent to deceive is manifest. Second, whereas the Caltech regulations explicitly exclude from its domain transgressions less serious than those it defines as fraud, the PHS Final Rule casts a broad net with the phrase "practices . . . commonly accepted within the scientific community."

Even under the Caltech rules, however, research fraud is different from civil fraud. First of all, tort law envisions a plaintiff and a defendant; someone has to bring the case to court. In order to prevail, the plaintiff must prove five points: (1) that a false representation was made—in other words, that the defendant cheated; (2) that the defendant knew it was false (or recklessly disregarded whether it was); (3) that there was intent to induce belief in this misrepresentation; (4) that there was reasonable belief on the part of the plaintiff; and (5) that there was resulting damage. By contrast, all observers seem to agree that research fraud can be established without the help of a plaintiff who can prove that he has believed and been damaged by the misrepresentation that has been committed.

There may also be a more subtle difference between scientific fraud and civil fraud. Tort law requires that an untruth has been knowingly perpetrated and that belief in the untruth has damaged a plaintiff. However, in all of the cases of scientific fraud that I have looked at

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closely (and this includes two recent cases at Caltech), the transgression consisted in failure to follow proper scientific procedures. In every case, the point being made was firmly believed by the perpetrator to be the truth. Fraud typically occurs when a scientist, knowing with certainty the outcome that a particular experiment would have, finds it unnecessary to go to the trouble of actually performing the experiment. That is precisely what Cyril Burt, for example, is generally supposed to have done. Moreover, the Baltimore affair apparently got started when Tereza Imanishi-Kari asked Margot O'Toole to replicate an experiment, confident that O'Toole would provide the data that Imanishi-Kari had claimed to have already obtained. When O'Toole was unable to get the desired result, the curtain went up for the great drama that followed. If, in these cases, the investigators did indeed fabricate data to support what they believed to be the truth, the scientific community would agree without hesitation that they were guilty of scientific fraud. Nevertheless, they might not pass the first and second of the tests for civil fraud enumerated above—namely, that of knowingly or recklessly making a false representation. And, to make matters worse, one might argue that, if all scientists rigorously adhered to proper scientific procedure at all times, very little scientific progress would occur.

To understand this argument, let us turn to a journalistic account of the issue of scientific fraud. *Betrayers of the Truth*, published in 1982 by Simon and Schuster, was written by William Broad and Nicholas Wade. Both were reporters for *Science* magazine, and Wade is now on the editorial board of the *New York Times*. They are, in other words, respectable journalists. The book has an appendix entitled "Known or Suspected Cases of Scientific Fraud," which includes the case of Claudius Ptolemy, the Alexandrian astronomer in the second century A.D. who wrote the *Almagest*, upon which all of astronomy was based until the time of Copernicus. Broad and Wade claim that Ptolemy committed fraud because he could not possibly have made the astronomical observations he claimed he made. By techniques of archaeoastronomy—using knowledge of how the sky works to run it backwards to see what the sky looked like at a particular time in the past—researchers have found that the observations Ptolemy reports were not made in Alexandria in the second century A.D., but rather, at the latitude of Rhodes in the second century B.C. They conclude that the actual readings were taken by Hipparchus of Rhodes.

Another person on the list of "Known or Suspected Cases of Scientific Fraud" is Hipparchus of Rhodes, whose observations, Broad and Wade say, were actually made by the ancient Babylonians. Both accusations seem unlikely to be correct. If Ptolemy's observations correspond to the sky at Rhodes in the second century B.C., they were not made by the

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ancient Babylonians. Broad and Wade do not comment on this apparent contradiction.

In addition to Hipparchus and Ptolemy, Broad and Wade list among "Known or Suspected Cases of Fraud" Galileo, Newton, Dalton, Mendel, and Millikan. If one subtracts from the body of science the work of Hipparchus, Ptolemy, Galileo, Newton, Dalton, Mendel, and Millikan—and, of course, all that follows from their work—there would not be much left. Yet the journalists never consider the deeper implications of concluding that so much of our scientific knowledge is based on fraudulent work. Broad and Wade may have stood on the shoulders of giants, but they have not seen very far.

To see a bit further, it is helpful to look in detail at a couple of the cases Broad and Wade cite. Consider, for example, that of Isaac Newton. Newton explained the propagation of sound waves in air. Newton's theory was so good he was able to calculate the speed of sound and then compare it with measurements. When he did, they disagreed by about 20 percent. Before Newton's theory, there was no idea at all why sound propagates in air, so to have calculated the speed within 20 percent was an intellectual triumph of considerable proportions. Nevertheless, Newton was not content with the small discrepancy, because another part of his work, the law of gravity, was based on the implausible idea that two bodies could exert forces on one another instantaneously and at a distance with nothing but void between them. He argued that this strange idea had to be accepted because of its success in precise, quantitative accounts of the observations. But if precise, quantitative success is the test of science for gravity, so it must also be for the speed of sound. Therefore Newton had to explain the 20 percent discrepancy.

The real explanation for the difference has turned out to be that sound is adiabatic and isentropic, but Newton had assumed implicitly that it was isothermal instead. In other words, in a sound wave the temperature rises and falls, pushing the sound along a little faster than it would otherwise go. Newton didn't know about that effect, so he calculated the speed that sound would have if it were all at one temperature. That subtle difference would not be understood until the idea of entropy came up two hundred years later. Obviously Newton was not to blame for not anticipating it. He still had to have some explanation for the discrepancy, so he came up with all kinds of arguments that are now known to be wrong: there is water vapor in the air that for some reason doesn't participate in sound waves; he had ignored the space taken up by the molecules of air, and so on. He made little fixes until he finally got his theory in agreement with the experiment. It is not very different from what theorists do today; if you have a theory that doesn't quite agree with the experiment, you speculate on what might cause the small discrep-

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ancy. In hindsight, Newton's fixes are funny and his motive revealing. But fraud? No, it is not fraud.

Another example in Broad and Wade's book is Robert Andrews Millikan, Caltech's founder, first Nobel Prize-winner, first president, and all-around patron saint. The accusation is based on notations found in his laboratory notebooks, which are located in the archives at Caltech. I show these notebooks to my undergraduate students every year precisely because they illustrate how real scientists behave in the real world. Millikan was measuring the electric charges of oil drops; he wanted to prove that the electron charge came in definite units—that it was quantized—and then he wanted to measure what that unit was. He had already made his preliminary measurements, and he knew the answer with some precision. Millikan had a rival, Felix Ehrenhaft, who believed that electric charge was a continuous rather than a quantized quantity. Ehrenhaft criticized Millikan's results, so Millikan went back to the laboratory to get better data to have ammunition against Ehrenhaft. Later on Millikan published a paper in *Physical Review* in which he says he is publishing the data from "all of the drops experimented upon during 60 consecutive days."

Millikan's notebooks, however, tell a different story. Each page has notations on one drop. Millikan would evidently spend a whole evening watching one drop go up and down in his electric field, measuring its speed, taking down data, making calculations, getting the result for the charge. He knew, of course, what result he expected. So in some cases he would write in red (everything else is black), "Beauty—Publish," or "One of the best I've ever had—Publish." And then on one page he wrote, "Very low—something wrong." And, of course, that one did not get published, in spite of the fact that he said he published everything.

Millikan did not simply throw away drops he didn't like. That would have been fraud by any scientist's standard. To discard a drop, he had to find some mistake that would invalidate that datum ("distance wrong," he wrote on that page). Every physics student learns the difference between errors, which are an inevitable component of all good data, and mistakes, which are human folly that must be expunged lest they contaminate the scientific record. Errors are lovingly analyzed in every experimental paper. Mistakes are discarded without comment. The oil-drop experiment was a difficult one that Millikan was now pushing to the limits of its precision. Even after years of experience with it, he was still capable of doing something wrong that would render an observation useless. If every scientist were obliged to publish every mistake, the literature would be so full of garbage it would be unreadable (it's bad enough as it is). Even worse, in Millikan's case, any mistake would seem like confirmation of Ehrenhaft's contention. So, when he got a wrong

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result, or when he could observe directly that a drop was not behaving properly, he would examine his apparatus to find his mistake so that he could fix it. It didn't count as one of the "drops experimented upon." Needless to say, when he got a result that agreed with his expectation within his expected limits of error, he did not try very hard to find some reason for throwing it away. This, too, is accepted behavior, even though it builds a real bias into the results. Millikan was not committing fraud. He was exercising scientific judgment.

It is worth noticing in these instances that both Newton and Millikan were motivated by the need to convince a skeptical world of what they perceived to be scientific truth. In both cases, inestimable damage to science would have been done had they not succeeded. Nevertheless, as noted earlier, perpetrators of real fraud also generally do so when they are convinced that they know the right answer to the scientific question they are investigating. Newton and Millikan did not commit fraud, and what they did do was necessary and important, but they shared something distressingly in common with those who have been truly guilty.

And it is true that some scientists have been guilty. Who are they? Sociologist Patricia Woolf did a study of twenty-six cases of serious scientific misconduct that surfaced in one way or another between 1980 and 1987. It turned out that, of these twenty-six cases, two were in chemistry and biochemistry, one was in physiology, two were in psychology, and twenty-one were in biomedical sciences. Furthermore, of the twenty-six, some seventeen were committed by M.D.'s rather than by Ph.D.'s. The conclusion seems inescapable that, at least in recent times, scientific fraud is largely biomedical fraud. The question remains: Why is that true?

One reason some have suggested is that there is more money in the biomedical sciences, and money corrupts. However, fraud in the form of plagiarism is not unusual in such fields as history, where very little money is to be found. The more important motivation, I think, is career pressure. In every case of science fraud I have looked at, somebody was advancing a career rather than seeking direct financial profit. But all fields, not only biomedicine, have career pressures. Some have suggested that, since the large majority of fraud perpetrators are M.D.'s rather than Ph.D.'s, perhaps it is because medical doctors are trained in a different sort of ethic from scientists—doctors are more concerned with the health of the patient than with scientific truth. Being brought up in this ethic might give one a different attitude toward what is permissible and what is not. I find that argument curiously unconvincing. Besides, a review of cases investigated by OSI in 1990 found eight of the guilty parties had Ph.D.'s, four M.D.'s, and two had both degrees. So M.D.'s may not be more guilty than Ph.D.'s in the long run.

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Another theory has to do with the reproducibility of results. In physics and other fields where there is little fraud, people believe that experiments are precisely reproducible, in the sense that if somebody else goes into the laboratory and does the same experiment, the result will be exactly the same. That isn't really true. Real experiments are too hard to be repeated precisely, but the idea runs deep that things are causally related in a relatively straightforward way and are therefore reproducible. It would be foolish to fake a data point, because somebody else will repeat the experiment and find the data point in a different place.

Biologists, however, believe in something called biological variability. This means that if you perform exactly the same experiment on two different organisms of the same kind, you expect to get different results. Biological truth is more statistical, less precise and inexorable than scientific truth in physics is generally supposed to be. Perhaps this variability provides a veil under which biologists might sometimes think they can hide a bit of cheating.

My own judgment is that scientists are most vulnerable to the temptation to fake data when (1) they are under career pressure to produce something; (2) they think they know what the answer is and feel that going to the trouble of taking the data is superfluous; and (3) they think they are somewhat protected because experiments are not expected to be precisely reproducible. This last point applies more to the biomedical sciences than to the physical sciences.

Faking data is not the only form of serious research misconduct. Plagiarism and misappropriation of ideas are generally also recognized as serious transgressions. The 1990 review of OSI cases turned up two cases of people who had faked entries in their bibliographies and one person who listed fake co-authors on a book chapter. In physics, where other forms of misconduct are relatively rare, I have seen serious breeches of ethics committed under the cloak of anonymity by referees of journal articles and research proposals. Some people object to guest authorship (putting the boss's name on the paper even though the boss did not participate in the research), but the practice appears to be perfectly standard in some fields. The practice of publishing the same thing in two different journals is called self-plagiarism by those who would elevate it into the category of scholarly misconduct. An example is this article, which is adapted from one that appeared in a Caltech publication, *Engineering and Science*. That article was not written by me, but instead was edited by Jane Dietrich, the editor of *Engineering and Science*, from the transcript of a seminar I gave on the subject. Publishing a paper you did not even write yourself is a new, groundbreaking form of misconduct that doesn't even have a name yet.

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Are we to take all these offenses seriously? To use the words of the PHS Final Rule, what are the practices "commonly accepted within the scientific community"? The self-image of most scientists, and I think the image held by much of the public as well, amounts to what I call the Myth of the Noble Scientist. The Noble Scientist is supposed to be more virtuous and upright than ordinary mortals, impervious to the baser human drives, such as personal ambition, and, of course, incapable of misbehaving in even the smallest way. The myth originates, I would guess, in the Baconian view of the scientist as a disinterested observer of nature. Although Francis Bacon's version of the scientific method has long since been discredited by philosophers and historians of science, it lingers in the public mind, and even some scientists continue to pay lip service to it. Reality, however, differs substantially from the Myth of the Noble Scientist.

No human activity can stand up to the glare of relentless, absolute honesty. We all build little hypocrisies into what we do to make life a little bit easier to live. Because science is a very human activity, hypocrisies and misrepresentations are built into the way we do it. For example, every scientific paper is written as if that particular investigation were a triumphant procession from one truth to another. All scientists who perform research, however, know that every scientific experiment is chaotic—like war. You never know what is going on; you cannot usually understand what the data mean. But, in the end, you figure out what it was all about and then, with hindsight, you write it up describing it as one clear and certain step after the other. This is a kind of hypocrisy, but it is one deeply embedded in the way we do science. We are so accustomed to it that we don't even regard it as a misrepresentation anymore.

Glossaries explaining the real meanings of terms found in scientific papers occasionally make the rounds of the laboratories. For example, "owing to difficulties in sample handling" really means something like "we dropped it on the floor." "It has long been known that . . ." means "I haven't bothered to look up the original reference." "Typical results are shown" means "these are the best data I ever managed to get." This sort of wry self-parody only recognizes that scientific papers may disguise what really happened, even though they are supposed to be rigorously honest. Courses are not offered in the rules of misrepresentation in scientific papers, but the apprenticeship that one goes through to become a scientist does involve learning them.

That same apprenticeship, however, also inculcates a deep respect for the inviolability of scientific data. It teaches how one distinguishes the indelible line that separates harmless fudging from real fraud. For example, it may be permissible to present your best set of data and

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casually refer to it as typical, but it is not permissible to move one data point just a little bit to make the data look just a little bit better. All scientists would agree that to do so is fraud.

Emerging tendencies in science may make it even more difficult in the future for all scientists to agree on an unstated common standard of behavior. One is the fact that today approximately half of the science graduate students in American universities come from abroad. These students have no less honesty or integrity than our own natives, but they may not find it as easy to understand the unspoken transmission of values that somehow is supposed to take place between student and mentor in a scientific graduate education. Another reason is the increasing importance of the computer in scientific investigation. Computer simulations tend to blur the distinction between theory and experiment. They are computations that produce "data" that are something part way between reality and prediction. They tend to undermine the few clear distinctions that do exist between what is permissible and what is not. Furthermore, the routine use of computers to aid in real experiments also tends to undo the old standards. For example, the rules and procedures of OSI seem to envision a nineteenth- or early twentieth-century scientist, carefully taking notes in a notebook much like Millikan's (ink only, cross out mistakes, never erase, and so on). This quaint picture has little to do with today's science, in which experiments are often entirely run by computers (computer memories can't be crossed out, they can only be erased). In some ways, the computer is the ultimate embodiment of the Myth of the Noble Scientist.

The Myth of the Noble Scientist serves us poorly precisely because it obscures the distinction between harmless minor hypocrisies and real fraud. The PHS Final Rule is dangerous because it assumes there is a single set of practices commonly accepted by the scientific community and sets up a government agency to root out deviations from those practices. Nevertheless, fraud does sometimes occur in science, and universities were certainly poorly equipped to deal with it before the PHS and the NSF forced us to put our house in order and write down and adopt regulations. It is easy to predict that we will be seeing more cases of scientific misconduct for a while; the very existence of rules and regulations and bodies designed to cope with the problem tends to make cases emerge. I can only hope that we won't wind up arranging things in such a way as would have inhibited Newton or Millikan from doing their thing.

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Break-In

DIANA DER-HOVANESSIAN

Sawdust, a stream of litter on the floor,
the door, inside the outside door, ajar,
the contents of each dining room drawer
emptied, strewn as if a giant had poured

out everything. I ran screaming to call
911, surveying the chaos inside
the bedroom, the lingerie a tide
of silk and nylon flowing to the hall.

"Table silver, all jewelry, an old photo
of my father at four in a village dress
the only thing his mother saved, pressed
on the inside of a brooch, an old cameo,

my mother's, my great aunt's rings."
Police ask for listings of such things.

II

I gave them the inventory, everything
I could recall, my former husband's war
medals, his silver officer's bars
my child's first tooth, pearls, my wedding ring.

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The detective asked if I'd been robbed before.
I thought of jewels buried in the ground
as Armenian families fled the sound
of shooting, Turks breaking in each door,

my grandmother's gems down to one cameo
sent to America with her older son,
two million relatives lost as one,
art, architecture, poems I'd never know,

everything except a picture in a cameo.
Answered, "Here in Cambridge, no."

✪ DIANA DER-HOVANESSIAN is the author of two books of poetry, *How to Choose Your Past* and *About Time*.

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Men Blow Kisses to Calves

STEVEN GROSBY

MORE THAN SEVENTY YEARS AGO, Max Weber, in his book *Ancient Judaism*, observed that the scholarship of the religion of ancient Israel was of exceptionally high quality. He was in part referring to the work of the generation of scholars that included Abraham Kuenen, W. Robertson Smith, and, above all, Julius Wellhausen. We owe one of the great achievements of humanistic scholarship of the nineteenth century to them—the establishment of the Source Hypothesis of the Old Testament. The work of the following generations of biblical scholars, such as S. R. Driver, Hermann Gunkel, Johannes Pedersen, Albrecht Alt, Sigmund Mowinckel, Martin Noth, and Gerhard von Rad, to name only a few, continued to be of exceptionally high quality. In general, this tradition of outstanding work in the area of the history of ancient Israel and its religion continues today.

In crude summary, during the last half of the eighteenth century and continuing throughout the nineteenth, primarily in Germany, biblical scholars, in what is known as the Source Hypothesis, identified four sources within the Pentateuch: "J" (designating those passages where God is called Yahweh, *Jahve* in German, hence "J"); "E" (those passages where God is called Elohim); "D" (for the stylistically rather homogeneous Deuteronomy, a part of which has been taken to have been the Book of Law of the reign of Josiah as described in 2 Kings 22–23; and "P" (the latest of the four sources, the Priestly, characterized, in part, by cultic and ritual regulations—for example, Exodus 25–31). It should be noted that the determination of the sources, especially the distinction between "J" and "E," has always been very difficult and repeatedly disputed. Moreover, the relation of the sources to each other, their dating in part and as a whole, and their relation to the history of ancient Israel and to its religion, continue to be debated today. In *The Book of J*, Professor Harold Bloom and the translator David Rosenberg (Grove-Weidenfeld, 1990) have presented to us the "J" stratum by itself; Mr. Rosenberg has provided us with a new translation; and Professor Bloom has written an introduction and commentary. It is to their credit that with

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the publication of *The Book of J* they have brought to the attention of the public this hypothesis, generally accepted by biblical scholars since the 1878 publication of Wellhausen's monumental *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel.*

About "J," Professor Bloom asserts that the enlightened and ironic author "J" lived at or nearby the court of Solomon's son and successor, King Rehoboam of Judah; that "J" was a woman who wrote for her contemporaries as a woman; that "J" is essentially a comic author who shows no awe or fear of Yahweh, for her all-too-human Yahweh is a childlike, impish, lively fellow; that "J" is a writer who chants the song of perpetual human becoming and overcoming, the exuberance of being. Professor Bloom's attempts to identify the historical location and gender of "J" are not serious; there are really no developed arguments other than frivolous impressions (for example, he thinks that because there are so many female characters in the "J" stratum, the author "J" must have been a woman—a determinism that, at its basis, is a repudiation of the human imagination, presuming as it does that men cannot imagine women or women men). Consequently, I shall not discuss further these latter two assertions of Professor Bloom's presentation of "J." In any event, they are of secondary importance to his argument and have already received much public comment. Essential to Professor Bloom's argument are his other characterizations of "J": an author who putatively has no concept of sin or self-abnegation and who, on the contrary, celebrates a doctrine of vitalism. It is this attempt of Professor Bloom to provide us with his own, but hardly new, theology of "J" that I wish to concentrate upon.

Professor Bloom asserts that the true beliefs of "J" have been buried under centuries of what he describes as a normative misreading. By normative misreading Bloom means that there has been an "investment, societal and individual, in the institutionalized misreading of J." Bloom's description of what he means by normative misreading is not very clarifying other than to reveal his own enthusiasm for the jargon and superficiality all too characteristic of too much sociology today. One concludes that Professor Bloom thinks that post-exilic Judaism and especially Christianity have sought to de-emphasize "J" 's putatively exuberant celebration of man by emphasizing beliefs in man's dependency upon God and an other-worldly salvation. However, nowhere does Professor Bloom acknowledge the possibility that the depiction of Yahweh in the "J" stratum is also, to use his term, normative. For example, there has long been a suspicion that throughout much of the history of pre-exilic Israel, Yahweh may have had a consort, Asherah, who was worshipped along with Yahweh (in 1 Kings 18:19 there is mention of "the prophets of Asherah"; see also 2 Kings 21:7; 23:4;

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Judges 3:7). Moreover, the recent excavations at Kuntillet 'Ajrûd in Israel have uncovered such inscriptions as "I bless you by Yahweh and by his Asherah."

There is debate as to what the term "Asherah" precisely signifies; but, in any event, we know from 2 Samuel and 1 Kings that many other deities were worshipped in David's and Solomon's Jerusalem. We also know from 2 Kings 18:4 that the Nehushtan of Moses, the bronze serpent, was an object of worship in the Jerusalem temple up to the eighth century B.C., two hundred years after the death of Solomon. Such religious beliefs and practices of the ancient Israelites have evidently been suppressed in the "J" stratum. One wonders why this should be if "J," as Professor Bloom insists, had no interest in worship or the cult. Thus, even before considering the particulars of Professor Bloom's commentary, we have reason to suspect that it is somewhat superficial.

Before proceeding to Professor Bloom's and Mr. Rosenberg's presentation of "J," we must digress at some length because of an accusation found in the introduction to their book.

II

Indicative of the public attention *The Book of J* has received, the book has been widely reviewed. Of the many reviews, some have been excellent—for example, that of Robert Alter in the November 1990 *Commentary* and that of David Stern in the February 1991 *New Republic*. However, to my knowledge, none of the reviewers has taken issue with Bloom's accusation of "anti-Semitism" leveled against "biblical Hegelianism" and Wellhausen in particular. With reservation, I reproduce Bloom's accusation.

> Unfortunately, these grand savants were all Hegelians, and like Hegel, they saw Israelite faith as a primitive preparation for the sublimities of the true religion, high-minded Christianity, a properly Germanic belief purged of gross Jewish vulgarities and superstitions. The idealist anti-Semitism of this biblical Hegelianism is almost enough to explain the strong resistance of normative Jewish scholars to the Documentary Hypothesis. But one can throw away all the anti-Semitic nonsense and hold on to what remains valuable in the Wellhausen theory.

The accusation of anti-Semitism is a serious matter and should be treated as such. In contrast, Bloom has not provided us with even a single example from the work of Wellhausen to substantiate his accusation. Indeed, there is no indication whatsoever from either his introduction to or his commentary in *The Book of J* that Bloom has read much, or even any, of Wellhausen's work. This behavior of Bloom merits the sharpest

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rebuke. To speak of the resistance of normative "Jewish scholars" on this point is far from accurate, since Franz Rosenzweig, Martin Buber, and Yehezkel Kaufmann, despite their differences with Wellhausen, held Wellhausen and his work in high regard.

There have been numerous refutations of the worn-out attempt to dismiss Wellhausen by maligning him with the Hegelian *Ketzerhut*, as Rudolf Smend so aptly put it in one of his many excellent articles on Wellhausen, "Wellhausen und das Judentum," *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 79 (1982). The catalyst for the critical interpretation of the Old Testament was not some specific a priori Weltanschauung, as Harold Bloom implies, but the existence of an extraordinary amount of contradictory material within the Old Testament, and, in particular, within the book of Genesis, the existence of different parallel versions of essentially the same story: two creations; two covenants with Abraham; two episodes with Abimelech; two accounts of Hagar; two descriptions of the sale of Joseph; two explanations for the name of Beersheba. The problem for Wellhausen and for us is what to make out of the contradictory material and these parallel accounts.

Suffice it to say here that already in the fourth century A.D. Saint Chrysostom (Homily IX on Matthew) and Saint Hieronymus (Commentary on Ezekiel 1:1) assumed that it was the book of Deuteronomy that was "discovered" during the reign of Josiah.

Furthermore, many of the early figures in Germany responsible for the development of the Source Hypothesis were not only not Hegelians (J. G. Eichhorn, W. M. L. de Wette), but were even explicitly hostile to such an interpretation (Heinrich Ewald). In fact, both the French physician Jean Astruc, who in 1753 divided Genesis into different sources identified in part by the word used to designate the name of God, and Eichhorn, who in 1783 argued that the final composition of Chronicles was to be dated after the Babylonian exile, sought to defend the position of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. Moreover, for most of the twentieth century, many German biblical scholars, while accepting the Source Hypothesis, not only have not been "Hegelians," but also have sharply opposed many of Wellhausen's conclusions. For example, Hermann Gunkel, in his great commentary on Genesis, argued that much of the "J" source was based on much older collections of different kinds of legends, etiological, etymological, and ceremonial. Gunkel further thought, contra Wellhausen, that many of these ancient legends were bearers of historical traditions (and, moreover, that there existed what Jacob Grimm called a "cooperative union" between legend and locality—for example, the apparent place numen of great antiquity described in Genesis 32:23–33). Then there was Albrecht Alt and Martin Noth, the former having argued for the existence of a very early

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pre-Davidic apodictic law, and the latter for the existence of a pre-Davidic tribal amphictyony of Israel unified by the acceptance of that law. Both Alt and Noth disagreed with Wellhausen's argument that the development of the law and the covenant were dependent upon the "reformation" carried out by the prophets during the three centuries after David.

Gunkel, Alt, and Noth could not have produced their work in the absence of Wellhausen's prior achievements. Their work, as well as Wellhausen's, was not an exercise in "Hegelianism," but rather an attempt to find explanations for a number of problems posed by a careful reading of the Old Testament. What was "Israel" before the united monarchy of David and Solomon? What was the relation of the religion of the ancient Israelites to the worship of *El* and of *Baal* at Ugarit or to the religion of the Midianites (recall that Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, is described in Exodus 3:1 as a priest of Midian). Above all, what was the relation of the prophets to the law and to the idea of the covenant between Yahweh and Israel? These problems still remain. Indeed, a few years ago, Professor E. W. Nicholson, in his book *God and His People* (in part, following the earlier work of Lothar Perlitt), re-examined the idea of the covenant in the Old Testament and reached a conclusion that might be summarized as "Back to Wellhausen."

Allow me briefly to mention just a few specific examples of some of the well-known contradictory material found within the Old Testament. In Numbers 5:11–29, a jealous husband may subject his wife to a trial by ordeal in order to determine her faithfulness. She must drink a water of bitterness; and, if she is guilty, her belly will swell and her thigh will shrivel. Note that in Genesis 38:24—from the source "J"—the punishment for harlotry was that the woman was to be burned. This passage, as with so many others within the "J" stratum that contradict his assertions, is ignored by Bloom. The trial by ordeal, as well as other judicial procedures, such as sacred lot casting (Joshua 7:13–18; 1 Samuel 14:41) and oath (Exodus 22:7–10), may be contrasted with more rational judicial procedures for the determination of innocence and guilt, such as requiring a minimum of two witnesses (Deuteronomy 19:15) and a review of evidence and cross-examination (Deuteronomy 19:18; 22:22).

A second example of contradictory material is found in Exodus 20:5 and Deuteronomy 24:16 (and Deuteronomy 7:10). In the former passage, Yahweh states, "I punish the guilt of the fathers on the sons to the third and fourth generation . . ."; while in the latter passage, Yahweh states, "Fathers may not be put to death for their sons, nor sons for fathers, each is to be put to death for his own sin." Yet a third example is the contrast between Leviticus 16:5–28 and such passages as Isaiah 1:11–17 and Micah 6:6–8. In the former passage, in a clear apotropaic rite, animals

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relieve the community of its sins either through their sacrifice or through their banishment into the desert (note also that, of the two goats mentioned in this passage, one is for Yahweh and the other is for "Azazel"—possibly a desert demon). However, in the latter passages, Yahweh rejects the sacrificial offerings of his worshippers, demanding instead that they do "only this, to act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with your god." Although I do not know the religious beliefs of Professor Bloom, I think it safe to assume that he does not sacrifice goats to Azazel, nor does he approve of trial by ordeal as a means to determine innocence and guilt. No doubt, along with Hegel, he rightly finds such religious and legal practices to be "primitive" in contrast to the more "sublime" perspective of Micah.

Let us examine one final example of a contrast that brings us back to Wellhausen's central point of analysis, the nature of Yahweh's relation to Israel. In Genesis 12:2–3 (from "J"), Yahweh says to Abram, "I will make you a great nation; I will bless you; I will curse those who slight you. . . ." Here we observe that Yahweh unconditionally stands with Israel (Abraham): he blesses Israel and curses its enemies. Similar statements of the relation between Yahweh and Israel frequently occur in the "J" stratum of Genesis—for example, 26:3 ("I will be with you and bless you"); 27:29; 28:15 ("Be sure that I am with you"). Note now how in Amos 3:2 the relation between Yahweh and Israel is different when Yahweh says to Israel, "You alone, of all the families of earth, have I acknowledged, therefore it is for all your sins that I mean to punish you." Yahweh no longer stands with Israel. In Amos 9:7, Yahweh says to Israel, "Are not you and the Cushites all the same to me, sons of Israel? . . . Did not I, who brought Israel out of the land of Egypt, bring the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Aramaeans from Kir? Now, my eyes are turned on the sinful kingdom [Israel], to wipe it off the face of the earth."

What should we make of this contrast between, on the one hand, those passages in Genesis, such as 12:2–3, and on the other, Amos 3:2 and 9:7? Wellhausen thought that Genesis 12:2–3, from "J," was indicative of an earlier, more "natural" relation between a deity (Yahweh) and his people (Israel). He further thought that it was with the later activity of the prophets—for example, Amos—that there emerged an ethical monotheism that severed this previous, more "natural" relation; for Yahweh was now understood to be first the God of righteousness, and second the God of Israel. It was only after this prophetic development, so Wellhausen argued, that there arose the notion of the conditional covenant between Yahweh and Israel: Yahweh would be Israel's God only so long as Israel obeyed the law. Wellhausen thought that this activity of the prophets—what Martin Buber, in *Kingship of God*, called "the great Protestantism of the prophets"—and the conception of the

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conditional covenant between Yahweh and Israel culminated in the book of the Torah, Deuteronomy, in the seventh century B.C. This culmination, so Wellhausen thought, was also paralleled by a development in the forms of worship: from the existence of the earlier, more "natural" local sanctuaries and local sacrifices (evidently accepted by "J/E") to the later centralization of the cult required by Deuteronomy ("D").

Whether or not Wellhausen was correct about such a development in the religion of ancient Israel and about a historical sequence of sources of "J/E," then "D," and finally "P," he brilliantly and courageously sought to account for the abundant and manifestly contrasting material in the Old Testament. That there are contrasting patterns of the relation between Yahweh and Israel within the Old Testament is certain. Whether or not these patterns arose in historical and developmental sequence, or may have existed more or less at the same time, perhaps varying in saliency or by strata within the Israelite population, will continue to be debated. I have referred to Bloom's judgment on Wellhausen's attempt to explain the existence of these and other contrasts. Since Bloom felt compelled to pass this judgment, we are entitled to ask what explanation he offers for such contrasts. He says absolutely nothing about it.

III

Throughout its history, the ancient Israelite worship of Yahweh always maintained that Yahweh had a special relation to Israel, whether it be the unconditionally "natural" relation or that relation contingent upon Israel's obedience to the law. The former, relatively more primordial conception that the interests of the deity are the same as or coincide with the interests of his people, however attractive, and historically repeatedly so, is not stable: the anguish and exigencies of life undermine the certainty of the deity's unconditional favor. So it was in the history of ancient Israel, with the destruction of the northern kingdom of Israel by the Assyrians, the subsequent siege of Jerusalem, the defeat of Josiah by the Egyptians, and the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians. Given the numerous defeats of his people, had Yahweh abandoned them? Recall such laments as that of Psalm 42: ". . . and all day long men say to me, 'Where is your God?' " This problem, the certainty of deliverance, is the problem of religion. Throughout the Old Testament, as Gerhard von Rad observed, it is the problem of whether or not the chosen people will live at rest in the promised land.

The events of the eighth, seventh, and sixth centuries, so disastrous for the Israelites, permitted only three interpretations: one, Yahweh had

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been defeated by more powerful gods; two, Yahweh was more than the God of the Israelites—he was above all a righteous God, a God capable of using even the Assyrians as a rod to punish those who had been unfaithful to him, a God who, in the course of time, would fulfill his promises and reward those who trust in him. Only the latter development, if such it was, would reasonably allow the continued worship of Yahweh by his defeated people. The third possible interpretation, that Yahweh had no special relation, either unconditional or contingent, with a particular people, but was the God of all, both Jew and Greek alike (Romans 10:12; Galatians 3:28) found, as is well known, its consistent expression, at least doctrinally, in Christianity.

IV

These problems, the problems of religion, permeate the "J" stratum, even explicitly: for example, Exodus 17:7, "Is Yahweh with us, or not?" They are not only ignored, but denied by Professor Bloom in his commentary. Before turning to Bloom's commentary and the ideas contained in it which are, in fact, alien to the beliefs of the Israelites, we must examine Mr. Rosenberg's translation. But first one must point out that there is a consistency in the factitiousness of the translation of some of the passages, a consistency in the service of Bloom's commentary.

It is not clear the extent to which Bloom is also responsible for the translation. Robert Alter in his review concluded that Bloom may be sufficiently ignorant of the Hebrew language such that he could not have read the Bible in the original Hebrew. Certainly, the Old Testament is not the sole possession of those who know Hebrew; nor is this Alter's point. Rather, it is a matter of the extent of Bloom's unscholarly pomposity. Bloom proclaims that

> I have read the Hebrew Bible since I was a child, with the growing sense that there is a great authorial *voice* in Genesis, Exodus, and Numbers that is very much at variance with the composite *voice* all too frequently *heard* therein. My experience over half a century as a reader teaches me the authorial reality of J as against a frequently numbing context of communal or normative *voices* . . . to recognize the *tone* or stance, the rhetorical art, of J does not tell one anything whatsoever about J's date of composition, which might be later than I guess it to be. But literary experience teaches one when an authorial *voice* is belated, and I *hear* in J an ever early freshness, long preceding all the other *voices* in the Pentateuch. (my emphasis)

This is such a great deal of proclaimed "hearing" of "voices" that we are entitled to wonder what is the factual basis for what Bloom "hears." If Bloom does not know Hebrew, he should not have written such a

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passage; or, at least, he should have been a great deal more modest in his claims about what he is able to "hear." If he does know Hebrew, then he is fully responsible for at least approving Mr. Rosenberg's translation. Indeed, Mr. Rosenberg informs us that his translation was influenced "by the insights of Harold Bloom." Let us examine the influence of Professor Bloom by turning to the factual basis, the "J" stratum, and Mr. Rosenberg's factitious translation of some of the passages. For our purpose here, the Jerusalem Bible edition of the Old Testament will suffice as a contrast to the Rosenberg/Bloom translation. I shall limit references to the Hebrew *(Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia)* as much as possible.

Genesis 3:16

ROSENBERG/BLOOM: To the woman he said: Pain increasing, groans that spread into groans: having children will be labor. *To your man's body your belly will rise, for he will be eager above you.*

JERUSALEM BIBLE: I will multiply your pains in childbearing, you shall give birth to your children in pain. *Your yearning shall be for your husband, yet he will lord it over you.*

Most objectionable is the Rosenberg/Bloom rendering of the last sentence. In the first clause of the last sentence, the word *belly* does not even appear in Hebrew. In fact, the Hebrew is quite unambiguous and correctly translated in the Jerusalem Bible edition, "Your yearning shall be for your husband." As to the second part of the last sentence, the Hebrew verb means clearly "to rule," "to have dominion over." The phrase is not, as Rosenberg and Bloom would have it, "for he will be eager above you," but "yet he will rule you" ("have dominion over you," "lord it over you"). The Rosenberg/Bloom translation is unacceptably tendentious. How tendentious may be seen by simply looking at Genesis 1:16,18 where the same verb is used. God is described as having made the "greater light," the sun, to "rule over" the day. How queer to translate the verb as "to be eager above." The Rosenberg/Bloom translation may serve well Bloom's portrayal of "J" as an ironic woman, celebrating, as Bloom would have it, the eager "vitalism" of life. Unfortunately for Bloom, this is not what "J" says.

Genesis 4:1–2

ROSENBERG/BLOOM: Now the man knew Hava [Eve], his wife, in the flesh; she conceived Cain: *"I have created a man as Yahweh has,"* she said when he was born.

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JERUSALEM BIBLE: The man had intercourse with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain. *"I have acquired a man with the help of Yahweh,"* she said.

Here, also, the problem of the Rosenberg/Bloom translation is the last sentence. First, the verb is probably "to acquire," for, in the Hebrew, the root of the verb "to acquire," *qānā*, is a pun on Cain. Secondly, the last part of the sentence is a prepositional phrase, literally "with *('et)* Yahweh." This prepositional phrase is somewhat difficult to translate; perhaps "together with Yahweh" is more literal than "with the help of Yahweh." What is not difficult to reach is the conclusion that the Rosenberg/Bloom translation, "as Yahweh has," has very little basis in the Hebrew. (Rosenberg/Bloom appear to have adopted Umberto Cassuto's very idiosyncratic translation of the prepositional phrase as "equally with the lord.") Once again, this factitious translation serves well Bloom's portrayal of the putative vitalism of "J" as if we were reading D. H. Lawrence! If we look ahead to Bloom's commentary on this passage, we discover a very good example of how he "hears."

"I have created a man as Yahweh has" is the proud assertion of Eve when Cain is born to her. What are we to make of her exuberant exclamation? J being so subtle, I read Eve's assertion as an ironic, narcissistic mistake on her part, since she would be comparing the making of Cain to her own creation by Yahweh.

However, what the passage actually reveals is not Eve's "ironic" and "narcissistic" "proud assertion" and "exuberant exclamation," but instead the belief in the dependency of man on the grace of God: "I [Eve] have acquired (created) a man together with Yahweh." The narcissistic mistake is not that of "J" but of Harold Bloom.

The falsity of Bloom's commentary on this passage is evident from "J" 's description of the birth of Eve's third son, Seth, in Genesis 4:25. Here the Rosenberg/Bloom translation is acceptable: "Now Adam still knew his wife in the flesh; she bore a son, called him Seth—'God has settled another seed in me.'" There is a pun here as well, for the name Seth is similar to the root of the Hebrew verb "to place," *šāṯ*. Eve's statement, "God has settled another seed in me," is an explicit recognition of man's dependency on Yahweh, thereby contradicting Bloom's understanding of his putatively exuberant and ironic "J." Bloom chooses not to "hear" this passage; he avoids discussing it in his commentary.

Bloom actually defends this factitiousness with his assertion that "all our accounts of the Bible are scholarly fictions or religious fantasies, and generally serve rather tendentious purposes." Now, it may very well be that any reader brings his own particular preoccupations to the reading of any text. Nevertheless, the text has its own independent existence that

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is not to be confused with those preoccupations—let alone rewritten in the light of those preoccupations. But let us continue.

Genesis 16:11

ROSENBERG/BLOOM: "Look," said Yahweh's angel again, "you have been made pregnant. You will give birth to a boy: Ishmael, you will name him. Yahweh heard your pun*ish*ment: you will hear a *male.* (Rosenberg/Bloom emphasis)

JERUSALEM BIBLE: Then the angel of Yahweh said to her: "Now you have conceived, and you will bear a son, and you shall name him Ishmael, *for* Yahweh has heard your cries of distress. (my emphasis)

This passage, like the previous one, also emphasizes the belief in the dependency of man upon God, that Hagar's cries of distress were heard by God. That God's deliverance is central to the passage is abundantly clear from the pun: the root of Ishmael is the same as the root of the Hebrew verb "to hear"—Ishmael means "God has heard." The intention of the passage is so explicit that the Hebrew conjunction, *kî,* "for," "because," appears linking the name and the reason for the name. Rosenberg/Bloom have made a mess of the passage by attempting to indicate a pun where there is none. In his commentary, Bloom also passes over this passage in silence, deaf to its unambiguous meaning.

Genesis 6:5

ROSENBERG/BLOOM: Yahweh looked upon the human, saw him growing *monstrous* in the land

JERUSALEM BIBLE: Yahweh saw that the *wickedness* of man was great on the earth

Genesis 8:21

ROSENBERG/BLOOM: Now Yahweh smelled a smoothing scent; in his heart Yahweh was moved: "Never again will I judge the earth because of the earthling. *Imagination bends his human heart to bad designs from the very start.*"

JERUSALEM BIBLE: Yahweh smelled the appeasing fragrance and said to himself, "Never again will I curse the earth because of man, *because his heart contrives evil from his infancy.*"

Genesis 18:20–23

ROSENBERG/BLOOM: Now Yahweh says: "The noise from Sodom and Gomorrah grows; as their *contempt* grows heavy, it rises. . . . Abram drew close. "Will you wipe away the *innocent* beside those with *contempt*?"

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JERUSALEM BIBLE: Then Yahweh said, "How great an outcry there is against Sodom and Gomorrah! How grievous is their *sin*! . . . Approaching him he said, "Are you really going to destroy the *just man* with the *sinner*?"

Genesis 39:9

ROSENBERG/BLOOM: "How could I commit this height of offense—and show *contempt for* the gods?"

JERUSALEM BIBLE: "How could I do anything so wicked, and *sin against* God?"

Exodus 32:31–34a

ROSENBERG/BLOOM: So it was: Moses goes back to Yahweh. "Heaven forbid, this people has shown great *contempt*, making gods of gold. You will forgive their *contempt*, perhaps; if not, erase me—bless heaven—out from the book you are writing."

JERUSALEM BIBLE: And Moses returned to Yahweh. "I am grieved," he cried, "this people has committed a grave *sin*, making themselves a god of gold. And yet, if it pleased you to forgive this *sin* of theirs . . . ! But if not, then blot me out from the book you have written."

I have considered these five passages together because the Rosenberg/Bloom translation of them clearly indicates a persistent pattern of purposeful misrepresentation. Once again, looking ahead to Bloom's commentary, we find that he asserts that "sin is not one of J's concepts." Indeed, Bloom believes that the writer "J" "chants the song of perpetual becoming and overcoming . . . the exuberance of being." We have already seen how this latter assertion was served well by the purposeful mistranslations of Genesis 3:16 and 4:1–2, Bloom's commentary on 4:1–2, and his strange silence about 4:25 and 16:11.

In these five passages under consideration, we observe the following tendentious sleight of hand: the Rosenberg/Bloom translation substitutes "monstrous" for "wickedness," "bad designs" for "evil," and "contempt" for "sin." To be sure, such terms as "monstrous," "bad designs," and "contempt" convey more readily Bloom's conception of man as the striving, creative human, who, through his imagination, is perpetually becoming and overcoming. The problem for Bloom is that this understanding of "J" requires a perversion of the Hebrew.

Nor is this simply a point of ancillary significance perhaps attributable to the nuance of translation. For Bloom's conception of the perpet-

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ually becoming, vitalistic human runs counter to the fundamental spirit of the ancient Israelites, as we know it from "J" and the rest of the Old Testament. Bloom's perspective is a subjectivist, modern version of the worship of *Baal.* Bloom champions a limitless elevation of human potentiality that arrogantly repudiates "J" 's awareness of our paltry and inadequate creaturely existence. (In particular, note in "J" the contrast between the spirit of Yahweh and the flesh of man, Genesis 6:3.) We find the most developed opposition to Bloom's "Baalism" in the writings of the prophets; and, no doubt, this accounts for Bloom's hatred of Jeremiah, "the abominable Jeremiah," as he says. (In Jeremiah 17:5, Yahweh says: "A curse on the man who puts his trust in man, who relies on things of the flesh, whose heart turns from Yahweh.") We shall return later to examine further Bloom's "Baalism." Let us examine more closely these five passages.

Hermann Gunkel observed that the different units of tradition in Genesis (for example, the story of Noah and the flood, Jacob at Peniel, the various episodes of Joseph) were stylistically joined together by "interludes," a particular example of which was the literary technique of the journey. Bloom shows no knowledge of Gunkel's commentary on Genesis; he does not seriously consider the possibility of the existence of such traditions, as well as the likelihood of their oral transmission. In any event, the first of the five passages, Genesis 6:5, is one such "interlude," providing a transition between the description of the Nephilim, the "sons of God," the giants (surely there is an oral tradition here!), and the episode of Noah and the flood. Gerhard von Rad observed that it was precisely these transitions that provided "J" a vehicle for a high degree of reflection. Note that in this transitional passage, where one clearly "hears" the voice of "J," the Rosenberg/Bloom translation defuses the author's reflection on the nature of man by translating the Hebrew word for "evil" or "wickedness," *ra'*, as "monstrous." In Genesis 8:21, the same Hebrew word that previously Rosenberg/Bloom had translated in Genesis 6:5 as "monstrous" is now translated as "bad designs." I interpret these different translations of the same Hebrew word for evil to be their attempt to evade "J" 's religious reflection on the nature of man, nicely summarized by Walther Eichrodt, that the Yahwist ("J") had already recognized man's inner proclivity toward evil (for example, consider Psalm 51:1–5 in conjunction with Genesis 8:21 and 6:5).

Similarly, Genesis 18:17–33 is a transitional passage linking the etymological explanation of the name Isaac (a shared root with the Hebrew verb "to laugh") in Genesis 18:12–15 to the story of the destruction of Sodom. Here we observe the use of the "journey" as a transitional device (18:16,22). One gets a good sense of the Rosenberg/

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Bloom intention to deflect the full effect of another example of "J" 's reflection when one observes that they use the unacceptable word "contempt" for two different Hebrew words, the first *ḥaṭṭā't*, "sin" (18:20), and the second *rāšā'*, "evil," "criminal" (18:23). It appears that Bloom wishes to avoid a proper translation of these two Hebrew terms, for they indicate that "J" had a conception of religious, moral, and legal boundaries that man must not violate. Bloom seeks to deny an essential aspect of "J," of the worship of Yahweh, and of all religion—the distinction between the sacred and the profane, between pure and impure, and the existence of absolute standards presupposed by this distinction. In "J" (contra Bloom, who asserts, "The judgment 'a crime against God, a sin against God' is something that I simply cannot hear in J"), to violate the law of Yahweh was to commit a sin. In Genesis 18:20–23, note carefully that in response to Yahweh's accusation, "How grievous is their sin," Abram juristically contrasts the just, innocent man who has maintained the proper relation with Yahweh by not violating his law (this is the sense of the Hebrew word *ṣaddîq* as Gerhard von Rad explained in his *Old Testament Theology*), to the sinner, the evil man, the criminal. The same is clearly the case both in Genesis 39:9, where Joseph refuses to covet his master's wife, for such an act would violate the law, and in Exodus 32:31–34, where to make a god of gold is to violate the law.

In contrast to these descriptions of actual acts of offense against the standards of Yahweh, Bloom wishes us to think that "J," whom he says "simply was not a religious writer," portrays variations of personal attitudes. This is the significance of eliminating those of "J" 's words, suggesting objective standards such as "wickedness," "evil," "sin," and "criminal" for more willful words, such as "bad designs" and "contempt." Thus, Bloom also thinks that "J" exhibits an ironic playfulness with boundaries. But where is the "ironic playfulness with boundaries" in these two passages from "J"?

> You will mark out the limits of the mountain and say, "Take care not to go up the mountain or to touch the foot of it." Whoever touches the mountain will be put to death. (Exodus 19:12)

> Go and choose animals from the flock on behalf of your families and kill the Passover victim. Then take a spray of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and with the blood from the basin touch the lintel and the two doorposts. Let none of you venture out of the house till morning. Then when Yahweh goes through Egypt to strike it, and sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, he will pass over the door and not allow the destroyer to enter your homes and strike. (Exodus 12:21–23)

The second passage, indeed, is the locus classicus of the boundary of the doorway of the home!

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Moreover, these two passages from the "J" stratum of Exodus are sufficient to refute Bloom's assertion that the cult meant nothing to "J." This is all the more true if we take much of Exodus 34:10–26, the so-called "Cultic Decalogue," to be part of the "J" stratum. The German biblical scholar Martin Noth was inclined to include the latter in "J"; and it is from Noth's *History of Pentateuchal Traditions* that Bloom and Rosenberg have identified the passages of "J." However, the "Cultic Decalogue" is not the only undocumented departure from Noth's work; there are several, including Numbers 12:1–16. In this last passage, Yahweh turns Miriam into a leper for her sin of disobedience against Moses. Needless to say, Yahweh's punishment of a woman for the sin of her "striving" does not sit too well with Bloom's depiction of his "J" and her Yahweh.

We need not pursue further our analysis of the translation and its dependency upon Bloom's conception of "J." There are many other examples of self-serving mistranslation (among the most egregious, in Genesis 15:6, *ṣaddîq*, clearly meaning "righteous," is translated as "strength"—a translation in the service of Bloom's wild assertion that Yahweh has nothing to do with righteousness, only vitality). I have chosen not to discuss the peculiar style of the English of the translation as many other reviewers (such as John Barton in the *New York Review of Books*, November 1990) have discussed it. A more important matter demanded our attention: the tendentious character of portions of the translation and, hence, of the commentary; or, as I suspect, the translation in the service of the commentary.

V

For the purpose of evaluating the object of concern of the "J" stratum, we need not decide whether "J" was an early collector of legends, or whether "J" was an author who wrote perhaps as late as the sixth century B.C., as has been recently argued by John Van Seters, H. H. Schmid, and, with some variation, Thomas L. Thompson. In either case, in the "J" stratum of Genesis we are confronted with numerous episodes characterized by their etiological and etymological intentions of cultic significance. For example, Abraham is described as having built altars at Bethel (Genesis 12:7–8; 13:4) and Hebron (Genesis 13:18); Isaac built an altar at Beersheba (Genesis 26:25); and Jacob built altars at Bethel (Genesis 28:19) and at Mizpah (Genesis 31:49). In addition to providing etymological explanations for the names of locations (Bethel, Beersheba), one evident purpose of "J" was to explain the existence of sanctuaries and sacred sites at these locations in Israel, and, further, to associate them with a putatively common genealogy of Abraham-Isaac-

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Jacob. The significance of the sacred sites (in particular Bethel and Mizpah) for the Israelites may be observed in 1 Samuel 7:12–17:

> Then Samuel took a stone and erected it between Mizpah and Jeshanah and gave it the name Ebenezer, saying "Thus far Yahweh aided us" . . . Samuel was judge over Israel as long as he lived. Each year he went on circuit through Bethel and Gilgal and Mizpah and judged Israel in all these places [*māqômôt*] . . . and there [Ramah] he built an altar to Yahweh.

The significance of these locations for the Israelites becomes clear when the term *māqômôt* is translated as it should be here, "sacred sites" and not simply as "places." What does Bloom have to say about the numerous descriptions in "J" of all these sacred sites and of all these altars being built to Yahweh? Nothing, for they contradict his entire description of "J" as a worshipper of Bloom's true god, unbounded human creativity.

I have referred several times to the religious problem par excellence, the expectation of deliverance from the anguish of earthly experience. This expectation is expressed in the passage above when Samuel says, "Thus far Yahweh has aided us." In "J," this expectation is repeatedly expressed in Yahweh's promises of descendants and of land (Genesis 12:1; 15:18; 26:4,24; 28:13–16). Once again, we observe in these promises the anxious uncertainty about whether or not Yahweh was with Israel. In Genesis 26:24, Yahweh says to Isaac, "Do not be afraid, for I am with you"; and, in Genesis 28:15, Yahweh says to Jacob, "Be sure that I am with you." About all of this Bloom says very little, other than to minimize the depiction in "J" of the belief in man's dependency upon, and hence awe of, Yahweh. For example, Bloom describes the aged Sarah's response to learning that she was to bear a child in the following manner:

> We have no name (that I know) for J's humor when Sarai laughs and an offended Yahweh proclaims, "Is a thing too surprising for Yahweh?" She is bitterly *sensible,* and he is quite pompous, but since in fact he is God and no mere godling, Sarai also *sensibly* becomes frightened enough to say, "No. I wasn't laughing." (my emphasis)

First, what Bloom leaves out of this commentary on Genesis 18:9–15 is that the passage repeatedly presents a pun, for, as I have noted, the Hebrew root of the verb "to laugh" is the same as the root of the name Isaac, Sarah's son. Note what is said when "J" departs from the pun: we have the "wonderful" or "marvelous" (not "surprising") act of Yahweh that Sarah doubts. Bloom would have us believe that Sarah enters into some kind of utilitarian calculation and then, consequently, "sensibly"

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concludes to be frightened because of her implicit rejection of Yahweh. Yet the clear sense of the passage is that Sarah denied laughing because she feared the wrath and burning anger of God. This fear is only heightened when the reader recognizes that there is no escape from the judgment of Yahweh—this is the significance of Yahweh's ominous response to Sarah, "Yes you did laugh."

In fact, Bloom insists that "J" "shows no awe or fear of Yahweh, her Yahweh is a lively fellow." However, a passage from "J," such as Exodus 14:31, explicitly contradicts this overly confident assertion of Bloom (see also Genesis 15:12–13). As to how "lively" a "fellow" Yahweh was believed by the ancient Israelites to have been, Numbers 25:4–5 (also from "J") will suffice:

> Yahweh said to Moses, "Take all the leaders of the people. Impale them for Yahweh, here in the sun; then the burning anger of Yahweh will turn away from Israel." Moses said to the judges in Israel, "Every one of you must put to death those of his people who have committed themselves to the Baal of Peor."

One would have thought that a literary critic of the powerful reputation of Harold Bloom would have considered more carefully and soberly such passages as Numbers 25:4–5, and thereby found a more appropriate description of Yahweh than "a lively fellow." However, in Bloom we have a literary critic capable of such frivolous observations as "J" is not "exactly a writer on the left"; "Joseph is the archetype of all those court Jews to come down through the ages, down to Henry Kissinger in the Nixon-Ford era"; and the covenant meal on Sinai was "a picnic."

As I have emphasized, the uncertainty about whether or not Yahweh was with his people and what it meant for Yahweh to be with them—these problems, the justification of one's existence and the existence of one's people, are to be observed (to be sure, in varying ways) in all the literary strata of the Old Testament. This is nowhere more evident than in the episode of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. It is also nowhere more evident than in the commentary on this episode how alien Bloom's description of "J" is to the beliefs of the ancient Israelites.

There are several commentaries on the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah within the Old Testament. In Amos 4:11, Yahweh says, "I overthrew you [Israel] as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah." In Jeremiah 23:14, Jeremiah states, " . . . I have seen horrors: adultery, persistent lying, such abetting of evil men, that no one renounces his evil-doing; to me they are all like Sodom, its inhabitants all like Gomorrah." Bloom thinks the problem in the episode of Sodom and Gomorrah is whether or not the "creator of life ought to destroy it when

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it has come to show contempt for him." This is clearly wrong; there is never any doubt, either by "J" or by Amos and Jeremiah, that this "evil-doing" merits the punishment of the righteous Yahweh. Only Bloom's "Baalistic" elevation of life per se ("if life itself is the only good," says Bloom) over the Yahwistic conception of life properly lived could lead to this conclusion—a conclusion at variance with "J," Amos, and Jeremiah.

The problem is whether or not the innocent will suffer along with those who are responsible for the "evil-doing." Abraham, approaching Yahweh, says, "Are you really going to destroy the just man with the sinner?" This anxious reflection on the nature of Yahweh and his relation to his people resonates throughout the writings of the prophets (see also, for example, Psalm 73). Is each to die only for his own sin (Jeremiah 31:30; 2 Samuel 24:17), or will it be as Yahweh proclaims in Ezekiel 21:8, "Now I set myself against you; I am about to unsheathe my sword and to kill both upright man and sinner" (see also Job 9:22–23). What does it say about Yahweh and his relation to his people if the innocent suffer with the guilty? Rather than Abraham being depicted as "behaving as if he were everything in himself," as Bloom asserts, we have an Abraham desperately seeking to come to terms with the suffering of man, both innocent and guilty alike, accentuated by such overwhelming events as perhaps the mid-ninth-century-B.C. victories of the Aramaeans and Moabites over the Israelites, the eighth-century Assyrian destruction of northern Israel, and the subsequent destruction of Jerusalem. How false Bloom's understanding of "J" is may be observed from the conclusion of the Sodom and Gomorrah episode. In describing the general style of "J," Bloom tells us that we find "passionate women and men not always ruled by scruples, reverence, or the spirit of fairness, let alone the spirit of self-abnegation." True enough, Lot's wife did not exercise self-denial; yet—and here is "J" 's judgment—Yahweh turned her into a pillar of salt!

Professor Bloom concludes his commentary by saying what the theme of "J" is: that mankind (Jacob, David) will triumph, "not because Yahweh determines it, but because J chants the song of perpetual human becoming and overcoming," "the exuberance of being." Alas, that is not what "J" states (see Genesis 26:5; Exodus 15:25), for this is the judgment on Bloom's worship of the "chant of the exuberance of being."

Moses answered him: "No song of victory is this sound, no wailing for defeat this sound; it is the sound of chanting that I hear. As he approached the camp and saw the calf and the groups dancing, Moses' anger blazed. He threw down the tablets he was holding and broke them at the foot of the mountain. He seized the calf they had made and burned it, grinding it into powder which he scattered on the water; and he made the sons of Israel drink it. . . . When Moses saw the people

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so out of hand . . . he stood at the gate of the camp and shouted, "Who is for Yahweh? To me!" . . . On the following day Moses said to the people, "You have committed a grave sin. But now I shall go up to Yahweh: perhaps I can make atonement for your sin." (Exodus 32:18–20, 25–31)

Neither the beliefs of Professor Bloom nor his attempts to pass them off as "J" 's are in any way new. They are very old, having been known to Hosea and on which he passed the following judgment: "Men blow kisses to calves!"

Robert Motherwell

1915–1991

Member,* THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR *Editorial Board

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Tennis Days

SAMUEL LIPMAN

I WAS TRAINED FROM BIRTH to be a pianist. Indeed, I have often felt that I was born not with a silver spoon in my mouth but with a grand piano in my hands. Regardless of all the music in my life, I have never ceased to be amazed by the fact that in my adolescence I was not just deeply interested in sports but, in some ways, absolutely bewitched by them. Despite my life as a child prodigy; despite my smattering of knowledge, as early as my twelfth year, of Aristotle, Spinoza, and, for light relief, T. E. Lawrence; despite my awareness of politics, both Communist and liberal-Jewish—despite all these, it could be said that, as I grew up, a significant part of me lived, both mentally and physically, for sports.

My first tentative involvement in sports occurred because of what might be called medical reasons. About 1944—I can no longer be sure of the exact year, but I was around ten—I contracted scarlet fever, which was then a frequent and highly dangerous disease. In the course of my illness, I suffered from a raging fever, which was only scotched, though not killed, by high doses of the then-newish drug sulfathiazole; providentially, a young doctor, just released to the home front, prescribed another sulfa drug for me, and this one saved my life. But after almost two months of fevers, I was badly weakened, and I needed nourishment, fresh air, and exercise.

So my mother took me every afternoon to a beautiful park in the next block, where she gently and painstakingly played catch with me. I remember hardly being able to raise my arm to throw the ball; I also remember hardly being able to catch the ball when she threw it from just a few feet away. But my strength soon began to return, and my mother took me out on the golf course. I hasten to add that my introduction to golf hardly betokened my parents' affluence or social position. We were as poor (as the old phrase had it) as church mice: my father was working six-day weeks in a shipyard, and my working mother left me alone each morning (I had a private tutor who was paid for by the city of San Francisco). My mother was able to take me once each week to play golf

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with her because she had found a job as a part-time secretary at the very fancy and scenically very beautiful—and I would assume then socially very snooty—Presidio Golf Club, nine or so (long) blocks from where we lived. During the 1920s, my mother had herself been a golfer, and she dearly loved the game. She had Thursdays off and was allowed to play at the club without fee. She bought me a shabby old bag, along with four cut-down, ramshackle clubs, all with wooden shafts—a cleek (a number four wood), a midiron (a number two iron), a mashie (a number five iron), and a putter. I remember going out on the course with her quite a few times. I don't remember whether I ever hit the ball squarely, but I knew I was in paradise.

It was significant that my mother deeply loved golf. During the late 1920s, and as yet unmarried, she had been part of the first wave of women playing on public golf courses; she told me about seeing such giants as Bobby Jones and Walter Hagen in match play. Because I was already an avid reader, no sooner had I hit (or probably missed) my first few shots than I went to the library and took out Jones's charming and courtly 1927 memoir, *Down the Fairway*. I, like my mother, loved everything about golf: the crisp outdoor air; the beautiful scenery of the San Francisco Presidio, where the golf club was located; the gentlemanly behavior of the players; and, above all, the personal satisfaction I experienced whenever the ball went in something like the general direction I had planned.

Sadly for me, my mother's contact with the Presidio Golf Club was severed when she took another job and then almost immediately went to work with my father in a small drugstore he had just bought with a partner. But she did take me to another nearby golf course, this time a public facility in the scenically glorious Lincoln Park, which looked out on the Golden Gate, the entrance to San Francisco Bay. For some time I had a monthly ticket at Lincoln Park, playing always on weekday mornings, usually by myself. To get in more time practicing my shots, I used to take a club and a ball and climb over the locked gate to the same park where my mother had played catch with me; this idyll ended when the police threw me out for being in the park after hours.

Not all my involvement in sports at this time—I am referring to the years between 1944 and 1947—was so active. By now I had discovered the existence of radio broadcasts of baseball, football, and basketball games. My evenings were frequently taken up by listening to the games of the hometown favorite (and my favorite, too) the San Francisco Seals. On Saturdays during the football season, I would begin the morning by listening to the broadcasts of football games from the East; my favorite team was Army, then at the end of its glorious string of victories under Coach Earl "Red" Blaik and starring fullback "Doc" Blanchard and

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halfback Glenn Davis. I suppose in some not quite misguided way I chose to root for Army because I identified the West Point football team with the victorious war effort. I would finish off the listening day by catching the broadcasts of games on the Pacific Coast, almost always games involving my local football favorite, the University of California at Berkeley. In the winter I listened to basketball games, again favoring Berkeley. Though I hardly need to add that neither of my parents had been to college—indeed, except for my pediatrician and my schoolteachers, I don't think I actually knew anyone who had attended college—my mother would join me in weeping (after Berkeley losses) over the singing of the Berkeley hymn, "All Hail, Blue and Gold."

At this time I had never seen a sports event in the flesh. It was of course still before the days of television, and I was not to see a live football or baseball game—or any kind of game, for that matter—for several years. So my sports drama took place entirely in the theater of my mind's ear; this was doubly true in the case of many of the baseball games I listened to, for these were so-called re-creations, embroidered accounts (accompanied by canned sound effects) confected by the sportscaster from bare-bones information about the plays and players coming into the studio over the teletype. When I actually saw a game or two—and I doubt if I have seen more than three baseball games, six football games, and four basketball games in my life—I was bitterly disappointed by their inelegance: all the bobbles, all the clumsiness, all the heavy-breathing sweatiness.

But what I heard on radio had fired my imagination. I read everything about football and baseball that I could get my hands on, and I soon had fantasies of myself as a player and a star. From fan magazines, I learned all about the players, and from books I learned not only about past greats, but also the rules of the games, how to make the plays, and even how to hold and throw the ball. I pined to put my newfound knowledge into action, but as I did not have a school team to play on and belonged to no clubs, I was thrown into playing in that good old American boys' social milieu, the street. Fortunately the street outside our little house was reasonably quiet, and even more fortunately I got on fairly well with several of the neighborhood boys, despite the peculiarity of what would later have been called my lifestyle.

Much to my surprise, I soon found in our scratch baseball games—played with a tennis ball—that I could catch well and throw fairly well; however, I also found out (not to my surprise) that I couldn't hit worth a damn. In our touch football games (tackle could hardly be played on a paved street, and in any case, I was already taking quite sufficient risks with my pianist's hands) I discovered that I was fleet of foot and reasonably graceful in feinting and dodging with my body while carrying

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the ball. I can hardly imagine how I could have made a connection between our gamelets on the street and my dreams of all-star glory. But I did, and at the time these dreams sustained me through many a terrible patch in my early piano playing.

Just how with all my play did I manage to find time to practice the piano? The nice answer would be that I had lots of time to practice because much of the time I wasn't going to school, or if I was going to school, I was only going half-time. But the truth is that I really didn't practice very much at all. I had never been a docile worker at the piano; it had always been necessary for my mother to push me, by fair means and foul, to do even a minimum of practice. After the spring of 1945, when at the age of ten I gave my last fully successful San Francisco recital as a prodigy, my career rapidly wound down, and by the time of my next recital, in January of 1948, I was already a teenager and thus an ex-prodigy. So there were hardly any reasons, coming from either my career or my psyche, for me to slave away at the piano. Furthermore, my relations with my then teacher, a teacher I had endured since two months before my fourth birthday, were increasingly filled with conflict, and by the summer of 1948 they would become intolerable.

It was in the winter of 1946–47 that I first became aware of the game of tennis. Bruce Hyman, a friend I had made the previous semester in the small private grammar school I briefly attended, wanted to play tennis, and he encouraged me to come along with him on his first attempts. At this point in my story, I want to be sure that the reader is aware of just how different a place tennis occupies today from its place in those far-off days of almost five decades ago. Whereas now tennis is a mass sport, played on a democratic basis in every middle-class nook and cranny of the United States and perhaps even of the world, it was then something of an elite pastime, ideally played on costly grass courts. Much, if not most, tennis was played on privately run courts in clubs and schools. What public courts there were, and there were many, still usually managed to create an upper-middle-class environment for those who used them. Tennis was very much a game for the minority of the American people who were college educated and reasonably well off, or for their children. There was, as I have earlier remarked about baseball, football, and basketball, no television to make the sport popular; radio covered tennis only as a brief news item, and then only when a great player, such as Bill Tilden, Helen Wills, Don Budge, or, in my day, Jack Kramer, made the transition to celebrity status.

The players were required to be ladies and gentlemen, whose behavior was supposed to be, and almost always was, quiet, well mannered, and respectful toward umpires, linesmen, and each other. The players wore white, with the only dash of color allowed being the

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stripes around the neck of the English cricket sweaters then de rigueur on the court. When I started to play tennis, it was quite common to see men wearing long white flannel pants and long-sleeved white shirts, rather than shorts and short-sleeved polo shirts. I should also add, for the record, that at this time there was a faint whiff of anti-Semitism about tennis; many of the most prestigious private clubs, and just about all segments of the fancy tennis establishment, were without any significant Jewish presence.

Fortunately for me, my mother must have thought that playing tennis was a suitably dignified way to spend some of my time, and the necessary tennis equipment was inexpensive. My father was able to get me a bottom-of-the-line racquet, loosely strung with silk, for less than three dollars; a can of balls in those days cost less than a dollar; cheap sneakers cost two dollars; and shorts and shirt together probably cost three more. So for under ten dollars I was fully outfitted and ready, for the first time in my life, to engage in sport on a regular and normal basis. When I began to play, I had no teacher and instead relied on close observation of the not very good players I saw playing at the various public courts my friend and I used. Almost from the beginning I found myself fascinated by how much spin I could put on the ball by striking it obliquely, with a snap of the wrist. Though the resulting shots very often didn't get across the net or stay in the court, when they did land in bounds, the crazy bounces they took caused consternation among my opponents. The pleasure I took in seeing the befuddlement my successful shots produced quite outweighed their unreliability, and what was to prove my characteristic tennis style in later years—spin, spin, and more spin—was quickly entrenched.

It was, I think, in 1947 that I entered a novice tournament at the nearby public courts (which weren't very good courts, by the way, for they sloped badly downhill) sponsored by the San Francisco parks department. I got to the finals, where I was badly defeated by a wise child who managed to force me to hit shots—horrors!—on my nonexistent backhand. He identified, along with my dedication to soft spin shots rather than to hard-hit flat shots, my permanently weak backhand, which was to dog me as long as I continued to play tennis.

But backhand or no, I loved playing tennis. I soon got a better racquet, this time better because more tightly strung with nylon. My friend and I continued to play together, and we remained approximately evenly matched, though his style of play, compared to mine, was a model of conventionality and grace. With my friend, I began to attend the local presentations of what later became annual professional tours. My experience of these events, which were to lead to the total professionalization of star tennis, began with the Jack Kramer–Bobby Riggs tour in the late

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1940s. For some of these events I even served as one of the ballboys; not only did being a ballboy enable me to get in free to the matches, but as ballboys we were each given two or three dozen tennis balls that the great players had used for only a few games and had (at least by our standards) barely taken the fuzz off of. I must admit that it was a shock how well these athletes played; almost as impressive as Kramer and Pancho Gonzales, his opponent after Riggs (I wasn't so taken with Riggs, who was even then a wise guy and, as a tennis player, a deep thinker rather than a strong shotmaker), was the ebullient two-handed player Pancho Segura, who did preliminary matches with opponents whom he easily defeated, and whose names I do not now remember. How fast, how straight, and how accurately these men's shots flew across the net! How much running they could do without getting tired out! And how elegantly they moved! Compared to their power and grace, I and my partners—and the players I saw next to me on my home courts—suddenly seemed like so many clowns.

When in the eleventh grade I returned to school, after a year of illness and private tutoring, I found that the private school I attended had a tennis court attached to the old mansion in which the school was located. The court was very beautiful, with dark green fences surrounding it; its only defect was an almost total absence of room at the back lines and the sidelines. I loved the elegance and privacy of the solid fences, so different from the cyclone wire mesh I was used to on public courts. But there was something even better about my playing tennis at this school than just the physical charm of the court: the school had a tennis coach, and so for the first time in my tennis career I had someone to tell me how to improve my game.

The coach was a curious man, one of the strangest men I have ever known. His name was Loring Merguire, and at the time I knew him he was a small and wizened creature, probably in his late sixties. He was a Scotsman and true to the type—or at least to the stereotype: he was dour and economical. In fact, I don't know how he supported himself, for the school job could have paid him very little, and I knew of no other source of income he had. For many years he had been a habitué of the Golden Gate Park tennis courts, a complex of some twenty attractive public courts that had over the years engendered some excellent players, including Alice Marble, one of Helen Wills's rivals in the 1930s.

Merguire and I hit it off well at the beginning, and he immediately took charge of my somewhat inchoate game. He divined my propensity for spin, and soon taught me to serve and hit the forehand; only my backhand, because of his lacks or mine, was to prove intractable to his teaching. He actually taught me two serves, in neither of which was the ball to be thrown in front, as in the customary hard flat serve: in the first,

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I was to throw the ball to the side and hook it from the left, thus imparting a spin that would cause the ball upon bouncing to break to the recipient's left (I should add that I am left-handed; for a right-handed player, the directions would have been reversed); the second serve he taught me was called an American Twist, and it involved throwing the ball behind my head, thus imparting to the ball a break to the recipient's right, caused by a wicked combination of sidespin and topspin. Merguire's forehand of choice was the Western, a shot in which the racket was held parallel to the ground before the shot was made; when the shot was hit, the racket was snapped so as to impart a large dose of topspin to the ball, thus causing the ball, upon bouncing, to jump ahead, forcing the opposing player badly back on his heels.

I learned these shots—the serves quite up-to-date, but the forehand then already old-fashioned—quickly. When added to my left-handedness, which seemed to cause everything I did to come from an unexpected direction, my new shots made me into a faintly respectable player. The sign of my advancement was my expensive new racket, a Wilson Jack Kramer Autograph Special; strung with a cheap quality of gut, it cost the immense sum of twenty dollars. Merguire immediately tapped me to come to play at Golden Gate Park, and to join his pet project, the Golden Gate Junior Boys' Tennis Club, or GGJBTC for short. This was a scratch group, existing for the purpose of putting on tournaments, run (at least in theory) by elected officers, and with my coach as adviser. My old tennis partner and former school friend, who had met Merguire at the Golden Gate Park courts, became the GGJBTC's president, and I was elected tournament director.

I actually ran a tournament, putting in an immense amount of work, almost without help, into the effort. It is my memory today, after all these years, that the tournament went well, and that everyone was pleased. But increasingly Merguire became unhappy with me. The reason adduced was that in some unspecified way I had been slack in the performance of my duties. As a result, a special meeting of the board of the GGJBTC was called, very much at Merguire's instigation, and I was impeached and removed as tournament director. The vote was close, and had my old friend, the president, been able to cast his vote in my favor, I would not have been removed; unfortunately, Merguire said that my friend, as president, was not allowed to vote, save in the case of a tie. I don't think that the reason for my downfall at the GGJBTC had anything to do with my work as tournament director; I suspect that I had offended Merguire by my general outspokenness and lack of docility.

Whether Merguire actually wanted to get rid of me, or merely wanted to teach me a lesson, I don't know. In any case, my mother, not surprisingly, did not like the way I had been treated and the fact that no

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one had stood up for me. Though I don't think he ever met her, Merguire found himself, in his love of the democratic public court ethos at Golden Gate Park, opposed by my mother, tough-minded as she was in the protection of her son. She decided that I was associating with the wrong kind of people at Golden Gate Park and that I needed to join a private club, where I would associate more with people of my "own kind."

The obvious choice for a club where I could play was the California Tennis Club, a then-fancy place (though located in the Negro ghetto of San Francisco) whose membership was largely that of the San Francisco WASP rich and their children. It had ten marvelous courts, all shielded from the wind; its two best courts were half-surrounded by grandstand seats, which were filled by spectators during the annual California State Championships played at the club. There was a little bar that served sandwiches and soft and hard drinks; there also were adequate locker and shower facilities and a card room. All together, it was a lovely and convenient place to play tennis.

The problem, of course, lay in just how I could become a member. Neither I nor my parents knew a single member of the club, and there was some reason to think that it would be very difficult for a Jew to join. But my mother, without my knowing it, had already solved the problem. One day, while at her dentist's office, my mother complained to the dentist about my tennis associations and her desire to relocate my playing. The dentist, a former beau of hers from the 1920s, instantly provided the solution: one of his patients was a member of the California Tennis Club's board of directors, and the dentist volunteered to speak to her about me. The patient-board member was excited by what the dentist told her about me—my child-prodigy status at the piano still obtained here, at least—and she quickly got me admitted to the club. Later I was told that I was the first new Jewish member to be admitted in many years. I should add that whether or not the club had had an anti-Semitic policy in the past, after I became a member, it admitted many Jews.

Merguire, despite his less-than-amicable behavior toward me, was deeply offended by my perfidy in leaving Golden Gate Park for a private club, and in particular for joining the Cal Club (as it was familiarly called), a place that he especially hated. I stuck around a little longer as publicity director of the GGJBTC and managed to win a doubles tournament that the little club ran; I still look at the brass-plated trophy I won on that occasion with pleasure. By this time Merguire and I were no longer on speaking terms, and to the best of my recollection, after my win in the doubles tournament, I do not believe I ever again played at Golden Gate Park.

It was in the spring of 1950 that I found myself graduating from high

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school—this time a public school—and a member of the school's tennis team. On the team, I won several inter-school matches, along the way winning my varsity letter. I was so buoyed by this quite unexpected honor that I volunteered to play the piano at the final school assembly. There I was, walking out on the stage to the piano wearing my new white cardigan sweater with the red chenille "W" (for George Washington, the name of the school) sewn on the pocket, and plunging into the meretricious but diverting Toccata of Aram Khachaturian. The applause was deafening, and at that moment I felt that my life had been well spent.

Just how good a tennis player was I at this point? Probably not very good. Though I entered a very few junior tournaments, I didn't do very well in them, getting knocked off in the first or second rounds. My game lacked speed and reliability and was deeply idiosyncratic, dependent upon what might charitably be called moxie, but what might better be called scrambling. Every shot I managed was peculiar in appearance, though fortunately also peculiar in effect. I was never in the kind of physical condition that would have enabled me to play a match at full speed; as a result I was, like a poor version of Bobby Riggs, reduced to snatching by calculation what could not be won by strength or through elegance. What I did have was tenacity—the ability to keep trying without giving up.

When I turned sixteen and was out of high school, I was thrown back upon the piano. Encouraged by my mother, I determined to make a great effort to meet people at the Cal Club. The first few times I went there, in the afternoons, I had no luck at all in finding games with the kids my own age; they knew each other from school, and, unlike me, who lived in a lower-middle-class neighborhood, all lived near one another in Pacific Heights, the best residential district of San Francisco. The manager of the club advised me to come at lunchtime, when there were bound to be some business and professional men looking for a game.

And so it turned out. I met a middle-aged doctor, whose game was about on a par with mine, and we began to be regular opponents. Slowly I met other men of a similar age, and I found myself with people to play. By now I was playing almost every day, and my game, in spite of itself, was improving. I used to hang around the club after my games, and one day I met a small man—Harry Likas was his name—who spent his business life as a private investor, playing the stock market down on San Francisco's Montgomery Street. But he was also a tennis nut; under his tutelage, his son, Harry, Jr., a student at the University of San Francisco, had earlier won the National Men's Intercollegiate Championship. Likas took a shine to me and became my second tennis teacher. It was he who ultimately was responsible for any minor distinction I ever won as a club player.

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Likas's attention, like Merguire's, was given over to my serve and forehand; like Merguire, he either didn't know anything about backhands or thought mine hopeless. He helped my serve by explaining not just where the ball had to be thrown, but where exactly I had to strike it. For my forehand, he required me to nail a two-by-four up at eye level horizontally on a post, and then to nail a piece of rug to the two-by-four. Then, using my Western grip, I was to smack the carpet flat with my racket, thousands of times, as if the carpet were a ball. This would force me to hit the carpet (and later, it was to be hoped, the ball) absolutely flat.

Likas's serve instruction made me quite feared among my fellow club members, for I now could serve with much greater velocity and, particularly to the discomfiture of my opponents, with much more spin; and because I used both a slice and an American Twist, it was not easily possible to predict, at least not without close observation, in just which direction my serve would break upon bouncing. My forehand also improved dramatically, becoming both much faster and much more accurate. While my volleying never became very good, I did work on my own to improve my overhead smash, which eventually became more than adequate. I also developed some effective drop shots and lobs, thereby making up in variety what I lacked in native physical strength.

All this meant that by 1952 or 1953 I had become what I might call a representative club player at a good club. I certainly could not hold my own with the several champions, like Harry Likas, Jr., who belonged to the club; but at the level of those men who weren't quite good enough to enter real tournaments, I was quite a competitive player.

By this time, I was in college at San Francisco State and a member of the tennis team there. I was thrilled to receive my first free racquet. To show just how pure intercollegiate sports then were, at least in California state college tennis, my entire athletic subsidy from the school amounted each year to one racquet frame without strings, one shirt, one pair of shorts, one pair of socks, one pair of sneakers, and a nylon sateen warm-up jacket with the school name in large letters on the back. I used to wear the jacket while playing at the club and was duly mocked for displaying my second-class college affiliation. I continued to wear it anyway; it was mine, wasn't it, and I had earned it, hadn't I?

Some of my new success in tennis was doubtless owed to my budding acquaintance with the works of the great English humorist Stephen Potter, whose *Theory & Practice of Gamesmanship; or The Art of Winning Games Without Actually Cheating*, originally appearing in 1947, had by 1952 (when I bought my copy in Paris) reached its sixth impression in England alone. Potter, a writer of BBC radio scripts and a Coleridge scholar, presented himself in a very funny fashion as the

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quintessentially failed club athlete who out of tenacity and cunning manages to win games—sometimes—by embarrassing and intimidating his opponents in numerous petty and minor ways. All of Potter, whatever game he discusses, can be seen as the revenge of the weak on the strong, of the physically untalented on the physically talented. I much sympathized with the way he described the superior players he faced in doubles matches:

> Our opponents were usually men from the larger colleges, competing against us not only with the advantage of age but also with a decisive advantage in style. They would throw the service ball very high in the modern manner: the back-hands, instead of being played from the navel, were played, in fact, on the back-hand, weight on right foot, in the exaggerated copy-book style of the time—a method of play which tends to reduce all games, as I believe, to a barrack-square drill by numbers; but, nevertheless, of acknowledged effectiveness.

To retaliate against the possessors of these God-given advantages, Potter recommended what to do after his doubles partner had returned a strong serve wildly out of the court; one must tell these young men of perfect manners: "Kindly say clearly, please, whether the ball was in or out." The youngsters will then crack, for their sportsmanship has been called ever-so-subtly into question. Of course I never was able to copy any of Potter's witticisms, but he did teach me that tennis, like all sports, could be as much psychological as physical, and I think in my tennis I learned the lesson well.

My undergraduate years in college, from 1952 to 1956, were the years of my deepest dedication to tennis. In principle I played tennis every day, save when it was raining, when I was actually playing a concert, or when during each August I attended Pierre Monteux's summer music school in Maine. I think that my game did actually improve, in a gradual but marked way, throughout this period. On the San Francisco State team, I was undefeated in conference play in both singles and doubles; our team won the conference championship four times. The only time I remember losing was when we played the University of California team in Berkeley. I won the first set of my singles match rather easily, whereupon their coach came over and quite intelligently told my opponent to hit to my backhand, not to my forehand. Like a zombie, my opponent followed the advice; and like a zombie, I lost the next two sets. In compensation, my excellent partner and I beat one of Berkeley's doubles teams (the only match our team won), an achievement that I still think splendid.

Somewhat the same unpleasant denouement as took place in my singles match at Berkeley occurred when I found myself asked to

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play—it must have been a dull afternoon at the Cal Club indeed—by Tom Brown, a lawyer who some eight or so years earlier had been a singles finalist at Wimbledon, where he lost to Jack Kramer. Brown was a really swell player, and I took the court with him expecting to be blown away. But at first he hit exclusively to my forehand, and he even had some trouble with my serves. Eventually we were tied at three games each. But then a crowd, sensing blood, began to gather, and Brown switched to my backhand; the final score was 6–3, 6–0. In my own memory gallery of little contacts with tennis greatness, I also remember at this time rallying with Don Budge, one of the true immortals of the game. His forehand wasn't much, being (like my backhand but, of course, incomparably better) sliced, but his backhand was stupendous. I remember the pace—the momentum and weight of the ball after it bounced—on his backhand shots being so great that the racquet was often jostled out of my hand when I tried to return them.

The most interesting matches I remember playing were not with players so much better than I, but with a player with whom I was well paired. This player, by name Muzzy Mosko, was an automobile dealer in his early forties and something of a kind-spirited toughie. He was an extremely tenacious player, with strokes rather like mine, contesting each point to the bitter end, and accompanying his playing with a running commentary, often needling his opponent. But I had learned such tricks, too, and our matches, usually on Sunday afternoons, took place in front of a large audience on the Cal Club's first court. As there was much betting on many points, betting which often involved Mosko personally, the tension often rose very high. Finally, after quite a few of these matches, some of them won by Mosko and some by me, I found my game cracking under the pressure, and I decided not to engage in them anymore.

By far the greatest pleasure I had in playing came not from singles, which I always found something of a physical ordeal and which sometimes in hot weather managed to set off my old childhood asthma. Instead, I loved playing doubles with a congenial partner and congenial opponents. The needed spurts of energy were well within my physical capacities, and I found pleasant the endless strategic calculations, the feints and surprises, and the humorous barbs that lie at the heart of a really good game of club doubles. I found my tennis friends, most of them physicians, lawyers, and businessmen, to be delightful, though I saw little of them outside the club. We rarely played mixed doubles, in part because the women members of the club didn't play very well; more importantly, we didn't play mixed doubles because all of us, I think, saw tennis, or at least *our* tennis, as a man's activity, to be undertaken for competition and companionship untouched by any hint of sexuality.

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At the end of August in 1953 and 1954, I took the opportunity, on my way back from Monteux's school, to stop in New York for the finals of the National Championships, played on grass at the West Side Tennis Club in Forest Hills. This was a time when the major interest in tennis lay in amateur competition; professional tennis only existed for a few great stars, and then only for the very short period of time between their reaching the heights of the world of amateur tennis and their inevitable aging. I had a wonderful time at the Forest Hills tournaments, where I was treated royally by my Northern California friends who were active in the United States Lawn Tennis Association. I remember fondly the wonderful play, on the difficult but alluring grass surface, of such stars as Vic Seixas, Tony Trabert, and, of course, Maureen Connolly; I remember equally fondly the treat of sipping a gin and tonic—I did come, after all, from a puritanical family—in the awning-covered marquee of the West Side Tennis Club. *Quelle douceur de vivre!*

From 1956 to 1958, I went to graduate school in political science at Berkeley and often found myself unable to come to the city to play. I therefore took up squash on the university courts, where my first partner, and instant teacher, was a fellow graduate student, Charlie Elliott, a son of the famed Harvard government professor William Yandell Elliott. I found squash amusing, but like so many tennis players, I could never forget the big arm and body motions I had used for so many years on the much larger canvas of tennis, but which were so inapplicable to squash. I also found squash dangerous, because I lacked the instinctive ability to get out of the way of the quickly moving, very hard little ball.

By the time 1959 came around, I was aware for the first time in my life that tennis, like other sports, properly belonged to youth, and that adulthood was not about sports but about the hard business of life. My piano career, if it was to flourish at all, had to be transferred from the equable, tennis-congenial weather of the West Coast to the altogether harsher reality of East Coast cold and heat. During that summer I attended the Music Festival in Aspen, where I not only studied with the great teacher Rosina Lhévinne but also met my future wife, the pianist Jeaneane Dowis. I played tennis there once or twice, but I found that the altitude—7,900 feet—made the ball travel too fast and bounce too high, and winded my, by then, out-of-shape body mercilessly. Upon my return to California for two or so weeks before I came east to Juilliard, I played tennis with a valedictory air: I recognized that a period, a happy period, of my life was over.

When I got to New York in the fall of 1959, I knew that my only opportunity for athletics once again lay in squash. I immediately obtained a guest card at the all-Jewish Harmonie Club, where the squash courts were well maintained and the resident pro was excellent, and I

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became a member in the spring. For the next several years I played squash sporadically in New York, and continued to play tennis when I returned to California to visit my parents. But squash still failed to captivate my imagination as tennis had, and naked reality had forced me to give up the idea that I would ever be able to play much tennis again.

But in 1963, shortly after my marriage, my tennis career did undergo a curious sort of Indian summer. My wife and I had once more gone for the summer to Aspen, where she was teaching as an assistant to Rosina Lhévinne. Though I was putatively playing the piano, I had no concerts coming up, and in any case had no connection of any kind with the Aspen Music Festival. I was bored, and I was terribly depressed. And so I turned back to tennis, and began playing often at the lovely courts adjoining the Aspen Meadows, at that time the best hotel in Aspen and the home of the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies, Walter Paepcke's (and Mortimer Adler's) old attempt to make philosophers out of money-making businessmen and other powerful folk.

A tournament was announced at the courts; I believe it was called the Aspen City Championships. I entered both the singles and the doubles; my partner in the doubles was one of the best local players, a somewhat madcap city refugee who, I think, made what passed for a living—I suspect he had other money—selling the firewood he cut up from the dead trees he himself had cleared from forest land. Playing singles at the Aspen altitude was probably a dangerous thing for me to do: I was dealing with my boredom and depression by eating, and by the time of the tournament I (being less than five feet eight inches tall) weighed more than 190 pounds and was no longer used to any kind of exercise at all.

I coasted through the early rounds of the tournament easily; the ski instructor types I was given to play had evidently never seen spin before. In the semifinals, I had to play the Aspen Meadows pro (and tournament organizer), a tall, rangy athletic type named Lefty Brinkman. Lefty wasn't a bad player at all; indeed, he was rather stylish. He had his backers in town, and, as it turned out, I had mine. Lefty realized that our match had some commercial possibilities, so he sold admission to the stands that overlooked the first court, and on a hot Saturday, at high noon, he and I began to play.

Like many left-handers, Lefty played, as I did, with lots of spin, and for once in my life I had difficulty taking my own medicine. I lost the first set rather easily, as Lefty ran me around badly and, in the process, made me look foolish. I found myself minding the humiliation of losing, and midway in the second set I began to fight. Somewhere in the second set—I think the score was tied at three games apiece—we had an altercation about the score. Despite the presence of paying spectators,

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we were playing without an umpire, and so we had to settle the dispute between ourselves. And, in a very messy fashion, full of barbs and rancor, we did. Suddenly a voice came from the stands offering an umpire. I yelled back, "Who the hell is it?" The answer shot back (from, I later found out, no less a personage than the powerful labor leader Walter Reuther), "It's Byron White, the Supreme Court Justice!" My answer, too, was quick: "What the hell does he know about tennis?" We did without an umpire.

But this colloquy appeared to have disorganized my opponent. And in the face of the heat, my overweight, and the length of the match, I won the second set, and, after a rocky start, pulled out the third set as well. I tried so hard that I badly sprained my wrist, and by the end of the three-hour match I could only hit the ball with great pain. I was dog tired and in no condition, especially with my bad wrist, to play the final round against my doubles partner the next day. But I did play, with a taped wrist, and I lost convincingly; my partner and I easily won in the doubles finals. My match with Lefty was talked about in Aspen for many years, not so much as an example of good tennis, but as an example of my ability to win a tennis match by other means. I often wonder whether I should regret my aggressive behavior in the match; did I have a right to try to win even if I could do so only by breaking the bounds of good manners?

Playing with another partner, I again won the Aspen doubles title the next year, though I had the good sense to stay out of the singles. Something that happened on the squash court back in New York in the winter of 1964–65 put paid to any thought of my ever playing seriously again. While playing the Harmonie Club pro—and even winning, for the first time, a single game from him—I suffered a severe muscle spasm in my neck; this event complicated my earlier history of neck sprains, and I soon suffered from an inflammation of the nerves in the cervical spinal cord. For several weeks, my arm felt asleep, and for some months I could not practice—I had at this time no place to play—the piano, and my doctor's advice was simple and brutal: "If you wish to play the piano again," he told me, "you must from now on behave like an old man."

I gave up squash for good. For several years thereafter, I played tennis in Aspen in a desultory fashion, as I did in New York with my friend the bookseller and ex-radical Walter Goldwater, but I was just passing the time, and I knew it. I began to play more and more poorly. My wrist had never recovered its strength, and because of my neck trouble I was afraid to serve or hit an overhead smash. I did, on a dare, play a bit a few years ago with some musician friends at the Waterloo Music Festival; but I found the level of my playing shameful in the extreme, and I have no desire to try tennis again.

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As my own tennis was winding down ever more quickly over the past three decades, tennis in general was taking the world by storm. Television brought the greatest players, playing in the most important tournaments, to every home screen; amateur tennis, once honored, if only in the breach, ceased entirely to exist, and was replaced by the big money—and the florid behavior—so endemic in professional sports. I tried to watch tennis on television, but I found it boring; the speed of the shots had increased so remarkably, and the physical conditioning of the players had improved so dramatically, that the players seemed rushed, as if they had to get off the court so that their replacements could come on. There also seemed to me to be too much tennis. The magazines were full of it, both in stories and advertisements. The right tennis racquets, like the right playing togs, became criteria of personal fashion. High technology was applied to tennis equipment, both racquets and shoes; tennis as a scientific study began to remind me all too much of modern medicine rather than a sport.

What has happened to tennis, of course, is only an example of what has happened to all sports. What were once private pursuits have now become part of the avalanche of professionalized popular culture that occupies so many of our lives. That was the dispiriting meaning I took from the famous televised match some years ago between Billie Jean King and Bobby Riggs. The match, pitting a not-quite-young woman against an aging man, didn't prove that women players were the equal of men—it only proved that one shouldn't play competitive sports on television after the bloom of youth has passed. In the King-Riggs match, effort was all. And so in the process of making tennis a mass sports phenomenon, a dream of grace and beauty—and of individual social contact—has been lost. All in all, the playing may be better, but the dream has been dashed.

In sum, I do have to answer one further question: just what did sports mean to me? I think the answer has to be that physical exercise, under competitive conditions, provided me with opportunities to escape the introspection to which I was by nature prone, and to which I had been trained in and out of music. Above all, in sports, I could take physical actions that needed not be judged, as were my actions in music and in the intellectual world, by the eternal standards of right and wrong, truth and falsehood. In sports, unlike the life of the mind, I could afford to lose; that blessed self-indulgence is to me justification enough for all the precious time I spent on the playing fields of my extended growing up.

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Civility

CLIFFORD ORWIN

ONE HEARS—and if you are like me, you acquiesce in—many complaints about the decline of civility in Western society. Civility, however, suggests forms, and forms leave most democrats impatient and restless. Yet civility is not just good manners, estimable as those are. Nor is it even law-abidingness, essential as that is. In fact, the devising of civility was synonymous with liberal democracy itself.

Those who lament civility may also regret the declines of citizenship, of civilization, and of community, all related to civility but none identical with it. Let me begin by trying to distinguish civility from citizenship. Citizenship is as old as the ancient Greek city. It implies membership in a community defined by a common substantive end, more comprehensive, more dignified, more authoritative than the particular ends of private individuals. Citizenship in this sense defines the serious business of life. It ranks as the proper pursuit of human beings who aspire to nobility and fulfillment. It demands of the citizens great rectitude, great virtues, great dedication, great sacrifices. It therefore supposes unwavering dedication to the ways that constitute a particular community and requires the strict education and laws that alone foster such dedication.

Civility is the virtue not of the citizen but of a certain version of what Rousseau called the *bourgeois*. What Rousseau meant by this term was a man living in society who was not a citizen, who was not primarily a part of a greater whole. Such a man is dependent on society without being devoted to it and is dependent on the other bourgeois for the satisfaction of both his needs and his self-esteem, while remaining in competition with them in both of these respects. Unlike Rousseau and his followers on the Left, I do not use *bourgeois* pejoratively. One type of bourgeois, undreamed of by Rousseau but chronicled in a fashion true to his insights by his great student Tocqueville, is liberal democratic man. He represents something other than a citizen, but something much

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more than Rousseau had expected from the bourgeois. His primary concerns are private, but his relations with his fellows are not guided by the mere egoism varnished by deceitful politeness which Rousseau ascribed to the bourgeois. His moral compass is civility, a genuine respect for the rights and dignity of his fellows which he conceives as equal to his own. Civility, too, comprises a community, if one much looser than that defined by classical citizenship. It is a community of beings, each of whom goes his own way while recognizing the right of each of the others to do the same and sharing a common interest in maintaining and defending that right.

No text so clarifies the distinction between citizenship and civility as Pericles' Funeral Oration in Thucydides. Not only is this speech deservedly the most famous of all celebrations of democratic citizenship, but it also contains the best-known celebration in classical literature of what might sound to us like civility. It is just this seeming combination of the praise of civility with that of citizenship which has endeared this speech to liberal democrats.

Among the things for which Pericles praises Athens is that it is an open society. While Sparta depends for its stability on constraint and coercion, Athens encourages the free flowering of human perfection. This perfection combines the excellence of the citizen with that of the fully realized human being. Pericles praises Athens for the freedom that its citizens enjoy not only in public matters but in private ones.

> The freedom in which we conduct the affairs of the city extends also to private life. There, far from keeping watch over each other, we do not begrudge our neighbor's acting as he pleases, nor do we afflict one another with those looks as painful as any legal penalty.

Censoriousness is unknown in Athens. Both law and opinion permit the Athenian to go about his own life unhindered. It is tempting to conclude that Athens celebrates diversity and that this celebration is what defines its unity.

In fact, the Athens of the Funeral Oration is one in which the value placed on diversity is trivial alongside the demands of citizenship conceived as an overarching unity. In Pericles' scheme everyone is a citizen first and is held to a very high standard: that of participation in a whole the greatness of which dwarfs the parts. When off duty, the Athenian may act as he pleases, but it is while on duty that he shows himself an Athenian. His private pleasures are merely a respite from public cares; as for his private cares, he never permits these to distract him from public ones. The one thing that Athenians do *not* tolerate is immersion in private life. "To mind one's own business," Pericles claims, is actually a reproach in Athens.

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In short, what is meaningful in Athens is the public sphere not the private one. One's true life is one's civic, not one's civil, life. In this all citizens of Athens are alike, although theirs is the sameness of human perfection rather than of the anonymous mass. The Athenian seeks above all to be remembered, to fashion a glorious marmoreal image of himself to be revered by all posterity, and even though he craves remembrance as an individual, he can gain it only as an individual *Athenian,* as one hero among many. The lofty communion to which Pericles summons the citizens is one of resplendent self-sacrifice—only by giving themselves wholly to the city can they hope to find themselves, those glorious selves to which they aspire. The diversity of the citizens is admirable only because it is superficial. It is a mark of the nobility of the Athenian that his diversions can be so much his own and his soul remain so much the city's.

For the opposing view in antiquity, according to which true humanity is more a private than a public matter, we must turn to philosophy or comedy. Consider such plays of Aristophanes as *The Acharnians, The Birds,* and *Peace.* Each boasts a protagonist who flaunts his distinctness from his fellow citizens and sets out to lead a life of his own—a life of which the city is at best a burdensome condition, and at worst a vindictive enemy. The playwright placates the city by presenting this life of self-indulgence as both shameless and preposterous (as resting on stratagems the impossibility of which is hilarious) and so just as comic as the civic life that is evaded. Only the ridiculous can never be blamed as subversive, since whoever so charges can only appear ridiculous himself.

I have opposed *civil* to *civic,* but for the founders of liberalism an even more fundamental distinction was that between *civil* and *ecclesiastic* or *divine.* (Such is the sense of *civil* in, for example, Locke's *Treatise of Civil Government,* in implied opposition to the theocratic politics of Filmer, and in Rousseau's chapter "Of the Civil Religion," the alternative to which is priestly religion.) The civil so conceived included that sphere of life that we would describe as civic (although from the very beginning liberalism stressed the civil at the expense of the civic). This opposition between ecclesiastic and civil was one that liberalism found, not one that it invented; but its re-interpretation of which defined it as liberalism. Liberalism did not invent this opposition because it was the inevitable outcome of the triumph of Christianity in the West, which had destroyed forever the possibility of citizenship in its original full-blooded sense. Under Christianity the unity that such citizenship presupposed was simply an impossibility. The existence of an independent priesthood that served a prince whose kingdom was not of this world necessarily implied the distinction of spiritual and temporal, ecclesiastical and civil. As Rousseau wrote in his *Social Contract*:

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What the pagans feared happened. . . . The humble Christians changed their language, and soon this supposedly otherworldly kingdom was seen to become, under a visible leader, the most violent despotism in this world.

However, since there has always been a prince and civil laws, this double power has resulted in a perpetual conflict of jurisdiction that has made any good polity impossible in Christian States, and no people has ever been able to figure out whom it was obligated to obey, the master or the priest.

A few paragraphs further on, he adds:

Of all Christian authors, the philosopher Hobbes is the only one who correctly saw the evil and the remedy, who dared to propose the reunification of the two heads of the eagle, and the complete return to political unity, without which no State or government will ever be well constituted. But he ought to have seen that the dominating spirit of Christianity was incompatible with his system, and that the interest of the priest would always be stronger than that of the State.

The division between church and state had thus fostered human beings who were not members of a single community that subsumed and superseded all others but who were subjects of a plurality of claims, none of which was simply comprehensive, but the boundaries of which were ill-defined. It had divided men both within themselves and among themselves as none could ever be sure to whom he owed allegiance concerning what. Diversity rather than unity now dominated political life, and with it came perpetual discord. Medieval thought had grappled in vain with this problem. Modern thought has sought to abolish it, by replacing it with civility.

Civility marks so great a sea change in matters of both politics and religion that it is hard for us today to grasp how things used to be. A modern Christian is precisely one who accepts the correctness of civility as an interpretation of charity. He agrees, in other words, that charity forbids coercion in matters of faith. His pre-modern brethren, of whatever sect, were nearly unanimous in holding that charity *demanded* coercion in matters of faith. For salvation being by faith—which was to say, by the true faith only—one was obliged to do as much as one could to propagate the true faith and to uproot false ones. This naturally included the proscription and punishment of false teaching, the chastisement (which extended even to burning) of obdurate heretics, and the vigorous persuasion of any of the faithful who had fallen under their spell. It was the duty of every Christian monarch to promote the true faith, and so of every kingdom to be of the true faith; conversely, one could not possibly be bound to obey a heretical ruler in matters of faith. Yet every ruler was obliged to legislate in matters of faith. So long as the state was deemed to serve Christian purposes, it was inevitable both that

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sects would fight over it and that each would reject its authority whenever it was not within its control.

Against this background civility emerged, which can best be described as non-Christian but post-Christian. Its inventors aimed to break the political-theological deadlock without giving mortal offense to moderate Christians. They therefore presented civility not as a rejection but as the perfection of Christianity. They tricked it out as the true interpretation of Scripture, which had eluded the intolerant sects. It was thus that the classics of civility assumed the garb of scriptural commentary, among them Spinoza's *Theologico-Political Treatise* and Locke's *Letter on Toleration* and *Reasonableness of Christianity as Delivered in Scripture.*

Civility or "toleration" (as they called it) was the means by which its founders sought to reconcile the requirements of civil tranquility with the existence of rival Christian sects. The classic solution to this problem was Locke's. He sharply distinguished the respective spheres of Church and State and forbade each from meddling in the other. Although Locke himself wrote of "toleration," the term was somewhat deceptive. It implied that, even under the new dispensations, a state's sectarian minorities would exist at the sufferance of a majority. In fact there was to be, politically speaking, neither majority nor minority. For the state was of no religion, and so in no position to "tolerate" citizens of some other religion. All were equal in its eyes so long as they subscribed loyally to its purposes, and these were not religious. (The clearest and most beautiful statement of the misleadingness of the term *toleration* is that of George Washington in his letter of 1790 to the Hebrew Congregation of Newport, Rhode Island. Blunter and less gracious is Jefferson's remark in his *Notes on the State of Virginia* that "[whether my neighbor says] there are twenty gods, or no God . . . neither picks my pocket nor breaks my leg.") The state aimed not to save souls, but only to protect life, liberty, and property.

Religion in the citizens remained useful or even necessary to the state. Spinoza, Locke, and almost all who followed them (including the American Founders) insisted on this point. But the only religion that was useful was one that had made its peace with the secular state. As the state was of no religion, so it respected no religious authority as superior to its own, in matters that fell within its legitimate purview. The state had the right to legislate in all matters related to the secular welfare of the citizens, and its word was law for them, religious considerations notwithstanding. Moreover, the secular authority, and no religious one, was the legitimate judge of what fell within the purview of secular authority. And as the state was of no religion, no religion could cloak itself in the state's authority so as to coerce other religions. So while the inventors of

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toleration wisely presented it as a means of getting the state off the backs of the churches, their chief concern was clearly to get the churches off the back of the state.

Toleration, then, clearly proposed to expel from public life all but symbolic vestiges of Christianity. Christians, however, were not slow to acquiesce in it. For one thing the various sects, exhausted by two centuries of strife, were willing to renounce their claims to primacy provided that their rivals did the same. For another, Christianity peculiarly lent itself to radical reinterpretation on this issue of church and state. More otherworldly than either Judaism or Islam, it proposed a sharper distinction between the things of this world and the things of the other, and deprecated more than its rivals did the temporal in favor of the spiritual, as well as law in favor of faith and charity. Ironically, the very dismissal of civil authority as merely temporal authority (which had justified medieval thinkers in subjecting it to the spiritual authority) offered modern thinkers the entering wedge for banishing religion from politics. Hobbes, Spinoza, and Locke all insisted that by justice and charity the Gospel meant, above all, law-abidingness, respect for the civil rights of one's fellows, and abstention from coercion or persecution in matters of faith.

They insisted, in other words, that the core of Christian charity was liberal tolerance of rival Christian sects and even of the presence of non-Christian sects—so long as these sects were themselves tolerant. In effect, the very practice of tolerance—the rejection of the notion of Christian politics—vouched for the presence of Christian faith. Conversely, insistence on a Christian commonwealth whose purpose was the salvation of its citizens—and which, inevitably, must prove sectarian and therefore intolerant—was held as the worst of crimes against charity. True Christianity required support of a commonwealth that was utterly indifferent to Christianity except as a means to its secular ends. Strange and implausible though this was as an interpretation of Christianity, it persuaded those who wanted to believe it. In the long run, all modern Christians have wanted to believe it—that, as I have suggested, is what has made them modern Christians.

Civility was also largely to take the place of citizenship in the new society. Citizenship was of course long dead, but one might in principle have attempted to revive it (Machiavelli had dreamed of doing so). In fact, however, for many of the same reasons that civility was preferred to sectarianism, so was it preferred to citizenship.

No one would deny, I think, that citizenship in the liberal republic is only a shadow of its classical self. Yes, the liberal democratic citizen is capable of patriotism and, where necessary, sacrifice, and, yes, the primacy of the civic reasserts itself in times of crisis. Only tyrants have

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been such fools as to underestimate liberal citizens whose backs were to the wall. Liberal societies, however, naturally shrink from such crises, even postponing them to their peril. In such societies, as Hegel argued, private affairs preoccupy the citizens in peacetime, the public and its call to nobility only in times of war. And peace rather than war is their normal state, the proof of which is striking. There has never been a war between two liberal democracies. Their lifeblood is not war but commerce. In foreign affairs the ancient republic sought glory by subjecting its neighbors; the modern one aims only at avoiding being subjected by them. It is as reluctant to rule others (except where it can persuade itself that it does so only to liberalize or emancipate them) as it is determined to rule itself. Liberalism and empire building don't mix—as confirmed by the fate of all attempts to mix them.

In domestic affairs, too, liberalism keeps politics in its place. It asks of the citizens only that they choose those who make the decisions for the society, not that they make them themselves. This was, in the minds of its founders, a great point in favor of representative democracy: that unlike earlier democracies, all of them directly self-governing and all pathetic or resplendent failures, its demands on the people were reasonable. It did not require citizenship in the full, perennially unsuccessful sense. In this, too, it fostered civility, with which the tumultuousness of direct democracy had never yet walked hand in hand. (In practice, not even the private relations of the Athenians were the hotbed of good feeling praised by Pericles.)

An even more fundamental reform was liberalism's insistence that citizens learn to agree to disagree on the question of the meaning of life. Here the liberal critique of classical politics resembled its critique of the priestly variety. So long as politics aimed at what was simply best for human beings, whether in this world or the next, it could not hope to avoid what was worst for them in this one: clashing claims to rule, discord, poverty, and oppression. The new program stressed not the achievement of simply the best but the avoidance of these ancient evils; hence its redefinition of politics (by Locke) as the protection of the rights of each individual to life, liberty, and property. This renunciation of citizenship in the old sense—of a community united in quest of the best and noblest for man—was necessary to the emergence of civility.

What we mean by "civility," then—at least if we speak with that precision that alone renders such terms useful—is not a quality common to a vast range of societies, or to these in their prime, or to all high civilizations, but one specific to liberal democracy and even its presiding genius. Citizenship among us largely (and paradoxically) consists in acknowledging the limits of the public realm. What defines liberalism is the substitution in everyday life of civility for citizenship, and so almost

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a redefinition (practically speaking) of good citizenship as civility. Liberal citizenship (except in times of crisis) may be casual, almost nominal. The full-time job of the liberal democrat is civility. He is neither Roman hero nor Christian zealot. He pays his taxes and does his civic duty, but he surely does not live for doing either one. (Indeed, it would strike him as an odd suggestion that he live for the performance of his civic duty.) His duties are few and light compared with those of the classical citizen. His life is mostly a private life, and civility a private virtue, a bond uniting honest men busy minding their own affairs.

Civility, then, as a contrived dilution of both citizenship and charity, resembles neither friendship nor love nor any other intense attachment. It more nearly resembles neighborliness. Good fences do make good neighbors; and in the case of civility, these fences are rights. If civility supplies the spirit of liberalism, rights supply the letter. To treat someone civilly means to remain a respectful distance from encroaching on his rights and to accord him the dignity appropriate to a bearer of equal rights. Civility is one glue of a community of a specific kind, a community of bearers of equal individual rights. It is a form of communitarianism, but it is an alternative to pure communitarianism. In a healthy liberal democratic society, rights would limit the intrusiveness of the community, but a strong sense of responsibility to the community would also restrain the assertion of rights. Civility requires respect for rights, but not every assertion of rights is compatible with civility.

Civility was sharply distinct from both Christian charity and classical citizenship and was intended to supplant both. In practice, however, theoretically necessary distinctions get blurred; indeed, to blur them may be necessary for successful practice. So it has been with civility. Even as the new teaching blunted the edges of Christianity, so residual Christianity blunted the edges of modernity. Such was in fact the intention of Spinoza and Locke. They grasped that the success of their project depended not on dissipating the moral impulses of either Christianity or republicanism, but on co-opting them. They sought to transform the older traditions from within, to harness their still-abundant energies to the new order.

The theorists of civility sought to maintain not only the traditional restraints and scruples of believers (albeit in a drastically liberalized version) but also many of their traditional hopes and anxieties. Insofar as submission to the restraints of Christianity had been inseparable from sharing in its hopes, something of the religious perspective was preserved in the new civility. The hope of a divine transformation of the world that would put an end to death and our other discontents was succeeded by hopes that the same might be accomplished through human action. This lent to the liberalism proceeding from the Enlight-

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enment a certain deep tinge of faith that was earned in one sense (in the sense that the founders of liberalism had carefully cultivated it) but unearned in another—that is, unsupported by the cold reason on which the Enlightenment allegedly rested. As for reason, it was content to bide its time. Such Christian fervor as it could not co-opt, it was willing to permit, subject to the qualifications already mentioned—which, for their part, Christians were mostly willing to accept. "Enlightened Christianity" was the order of the day. Christian longings (and indignation) mingled with post- and anti-Christian ones to produce a deeper commitment to liberalism than was warranted by merely rational arguments for merely selfish interests.

I know of no more prosaic example, but also no finer statement of this ambivalence, than Tocqueville's discussion in the second volume of *Democracy in America* of the principle of self-interest rightly understood. This discussion is highly revealing of the assumptions supporting liberal civility. The Americans, Tocqueville found, adhered to a doctrine of enlightened self-interest. At the same time, they were animated like all peoples by certain moral impulses irreducible to the prospect of foreseeable gain. They were, however, unwilling to own up to any such disinterested inclinations, insisting rather that in all the good that they did they obeyed the principle of self-interest rightly understood. An American would modestly explain that, if he had rushed into a burning house to save the children of a stranger, it was because he expected someone to do the same for him some time. Tocqueville, for his part, doubts not only the truth of the Americans' account of their conduct but also its coherence. He does not regard as "evident in all its parts" the principle so widely and fervently invoked by his American hosts. The Americans presume a reciprocity or justice in human life in the faith that this presumption is rational, yet reason cannot establish it.

Tocqueville does not deny (in fact, he emphatically affirms) that it is good for democracy that its citizens live by this principle. He sees no alternative, and regards this one as tolerably effective at maintaining public morality. It is in the interests of society that citizens pursue a policy not always clearly in their interest as individuals. The Americans thought that by means of self-interest rightly understood they had resolved all tension between the good of the individual and that of society. Their adherence to their calculating principle rested ultimately on an uncalculated hope. When Tocqueville argues in the chapter following that the power of this principle depends finally on its extension to the next world, he indicates that it builds on hopes that reason is incapable of supporting. The principle of self-interest rightly understood—that most prosaic, most utilitarian, most secular of principles—presupposes the existence of a just God.

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This helps to explain why liberalism for at least two centuries managed to command a fervor apparently quite alien to it. Liberalism was less tame when its tinge of residual Christianity was greater, but the excesses to which it tended were less likely to be ones of individualism. In some ways it worked better when it was less perfect, in the sense that it was less conscious of its implications. Indeed, liberal democracy has found itself in the position of the man who, having crawled out on a limb, has occupied himself with sawing it off. The continuing dissemination of an ever more radical and comprehensive enlightenment, while it has not produced an informed citizenry, has at least produced a skeptical one. You would have to wear a very peculiar set of blinders not to see that Americans are no longer a Christian people, and that whatever revival is afoot has begun none too soon.

But it is not just that premodern traditions are largely non-renewable resources. It is also that these were not wholly reliable props for civility to begin with. So liberalism suffers with the passage of time from two quite opposite headaches: the decay of the traditions that it sought to co-opt and their persistence. It has evoked and depended on certain Christian and civic longings that it has been unable wholly to satisfy. Of course, life is nowhere perfect, but it has proved, in the past two centuries, much less imperfect in liberal democracy than elsewhere. Still, as clear-eyed non-utopians who because of the very clearness of their vision saw the necessity of appealing to utopian impulses, the founders of liberalism took a tiger by the tail. They undertook a balancing act of perhaps even greater delicacy than they knew. They enlisted in their project long-standing hopes for a truly decisive progress in human affairs—for the total abolition of age-old evils. They sketched a future of unimagined peace, prosperity, and good will on earth. While they guaranteed public vindication not of happiness but only of the right to pursue it, it was only human to take this for some kind of guarantee of happiness itself. It is not surprising that liberalism was soon succeeded on the Continent by more radical versions of modernity, apparently further from Christianity (and much more thoroughly hostile to it), but more emphatic in promising its yearnings an earthly satisfaction. These movements, even where, as in Anglo-Saxon societies, they have not prevailed, have served as the bad conscience of liberalism. They have lured it in expansive directions, towards the making of ever bigger promises that, being liberalism, it cannot possibly keep.

The effect of all of which, in the context of our very real social problems, has been to discredit civility and the rights that inform it as mere "bourgeois formalism." While Marx finds few takers these days, this aspect of his critique persists, as often, nowadays, with reference to race or gender as to class. Such rhetoric, even where it supports merely

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lawsuits rather than lawbreaking, obviously weakens attachment to civility and implies sympathy for those who flout it. It has fostered the rise of the new politics of adversarialism, of a frank insistence on the expansion of the rights of some at the expense of those of others, by way of compensation for past inequities.

Strangely, this surge of individual and group self-assertion draws upon a rhetoric of increased communitarianism—one that also, paradoxically enough, given the link in history and logic between community and homogeneity, seeks to legitimize the widest possible diversity. "Community" and "diversity" converge in such loaded terms of the day as "inclusiveness" (which is deemed to be good) and "marginalization" (which is not). As a radicalization of earlier liberal arguments for tolerance, the rhetoric of inclusion presents itself as just a kinder, gentler stage of the onward march of liberalism.

In fact, however, we must take both the new communitarianism and its liberal pedigree with a grain of salt. One—perhaps the predominant—symptom of this rhetoric of inclusion is an open-ended extension of the rights of those deemed "disadvantaged." Rights, too, are nothing new, and their extension to those who lacked them has been a project of liberalism from its inception. Yet the novel emphasis on bypassing the political branches of government in order to seek legal remedies, the insistence that some individuals and groups are entitled to rights to which others are not, the fact that the politics of so-called inclusion so often serves to polarize society, that it issues in demands for public intervention of a scope incompatible with the liberal premise of limited government—all of these are reasons for suspicion. A communitarianism that rests on a debunking of civility as a self-serving contrivance of white Western males is obviously at some remove from the community of attachment to civility that figured in the original liberal intention.

Proponents of the newer tendencies like to call themselves "post-liberal" and even "post-modern." For now, let's remind them of the basic principle informing (merely liberal and modern) civility—that weak fences (or no fences) make for truculent neighbors. Will adversarialism inaugurate an era of post-liberal good feeling? One lives in hope, but without holding one's breath. Mounting litigiousness inside the courtroom; mounting disrespect for law outside it—these are not a recipe for utopia.

I don't mean to pretend that the strains on civility are primarily theoretical in nature. America has greater problems these days with citizens who have never learned civility—the ones who crowd our penitentiaries and, in even greater numbers, our streets—than with those who have moved on to some vision of "post-liberalism." And whatever notions may prevail in the universities, ordinary people tend to

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have more sense in these matters than professors. Still, the dual rhetoric of tolerance or "inclusiveness" or "empathy" on the one hand and determined self-assertion on the other has confused many ordinary people and abetted many dangerous ones.

Civility can seem conservative today. But what its defenders are groping to conserve is liberalism. Although even so-called liberals must routinely invoke "law and order," few of them have their hearts in it. Yet law and order, enforced as much by a spirit of lawfulness as by a good police force, is really just the heart of civility, which is to say of liberalism itself. If liberalism must shun the "*L*-word," if it can no longer speak its name, that is only because the people at large have the sense to prefer the thing to the word.

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Album of Marilyn Monroe

STANLEY KAUFFMANN

I

My experience with Marilyn Monroe began with Edith Sitwell. It was the spring of 1955. I was the editor-in-chief of a new, small publishing house in New York. A photographer named Sam Shaw had spent some weeks in the previous year following Monroe about while she was making a film called *The Seven Year Itch*, and he had twelve hundred candid shots that he had taken of her. He brought them to us, suggesting that a selection of them would make an appealing photo diary of a star working on a film. We thought it would have been a good idea with any important star of the day, but even juicier because it was Monroe, who was at that time more publicized than almost any other figure in the entertainment world. Shaw sealed the matter by telling us that Edith Sitwell had met Monroe, that Sitwell was much interested in her and would write an introduction to the book. All we had to do, he said, was telephone Sitwell at the Hotel St. Regis, where she would be for a while, and the introduction would be forthcoming.

Monroe had already agreed to the book, stipulating only that she have the right to approve the choice of pictures and the captions. The firm agreed, and I quickly reserved for myself the privilege of selecting the pictures and writing the captions and showing the completed dummy book to Monroe, who was then living at the Waldorf Towers in New York. "Rank has its privileges," I explained kindly to my teeth-gnashing associate editor.

Within the next week or so, I picked 120 of the photos, arranged them in chronological order, and wrote a brief caption for each picture. I felt especially buoyant while doing the job. I had just completed a novel, which I had worked on a couple of hours every morning before getting to the office by nine. It was ready to be submitted to my agent and to the publisher of my previous novel. I felt manifold, progressing in my private work and humming along in the establishment of this new firm. Laura said, with wifely wisdom, that the Monroe assignment was like a reward for writing a novel while filling the editorial post. I was willing to accept that.

When the dummy picture book was finished, I thought it better to approach Sitwell before showing it to Monroe. With Sitwell's introduction in place, Monroe might be more agreeable to my arrangement of the book. Besides, I had read that Sitwell was soon returning to London, so there was time pressure.

About ten o'clock one morning I telephoned the St. Regis and asked for Edith Sitwell. The operator rang the room. No answer. The operator said, "I think she's in having breakfast." She rang the restaurant. I asked the captain if Miss Sitwell was there. Yes, he said and asked me to hold on.

In a moment, surprisingly quickly in fact, a woman's voice exploded in my ear, an aristocratic English explosion. "Yes? What is it?"

"Miss Sitwell?" I asked.

More thunderously: "My name is Dame Edith Sitwell, if you please."

Off to this good start, I tendered, "I'm very sorry, Dame Edith."

"Well? What *is* it?"

I gave her my name and affiliation. Then I

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said, "I'm calling about Marilyn Monroe. I've been told that—"

"How *dare* you interrupt my breakfast with this abominable nonsense?" She banged the telephone down. It was as if she had banged it on my head.

I felt rotten, cheap, small. Clearly Shaw had been too sanguine. The worst of it was that, since she apparently had no interest in the matter, her anger was completely just. And she had destroyed a fantasy. I had nursed a dream of meeting her and conversing with her, not only as editor but as, in a minuscule way, fellow writer. A further reward for finishing the novel. But that brief telephone exchange, which echoed in my head, blasted that dream away.

I couldn't let the matter rest there. To ease myself at least a little, I wrote her a letter at once, on the company letterhead, explaining why I had intruded and asking her forgiveness. I sent it off within an hour. Two days later I read that she had sailed for England. I had not heard from her. I resigned myself to living with that rip in my inner fabric, never to be mended. "You'll get over it," said Laura, although she knew that I never would entirely.

Ten days later, an airmail letter from England arrived at the office, addressed by hand to Stanley Kauffmann, Esq. She had spelled my name correctly! My heart leaped. On the flap of the envelope was printed "Sesame Imperial and Pioneer Club." Above this line was written "*from* Dame Edith Sitwell. D.B.E. D.Litt. D.Litt. D.Litt."

Inside was a four-page handwritten letter. It was a marvel. I still take it out on gray days, literally gray or otherwise, and let it crackle again.

She began by thanking me for my letter, which had reached her at the exact moment she was leaving for her ship, so the answer had been delayed. She had been under the impression that I was a member of the press, who had been pestering her for two months on the subject of Miss Monroe. Had she known who was calling, she would certainly have spoken with me.

She had met Miss Monroe only once, while she was in Hollywood. Dame Edith had thought her a delightful young woman and had said that, if she came to England, she would like to give a luncheon party for her. People *do* ask each other to lunch, said Dame Edith. It had not struck her that, outside a lunatic asylum, this would be regarded as a phenomenon in nature.

However, some moron attached to one of the papers, she continued, got to hear of this—to him—world-shattering event and had begun to pester her unceasingly. Other lower-grade mental defectives had also rung up. This pestering had lasted for *two months*. The story had reached France, India, and Egypt. A Calcutta paper had said that she lived only "to be a mother to Miss Monroe." An Egyptian paper had said that Dame Edith was going to "teach her philosophy."

She was disappointed to learn that Miss Monroe had been in New York while she was there. She would have liked, so much, to see her again. She still hoped that, if Miss Monroe came to London, they would have their long-deferred luncheon party.

She closed with many regrets for this misunderstanding and signed herself mine sincerely.

The letter re-established me with myself. I no longer felt crawly. Dame Edith presumably knew nothing about me as a writer and might well not have cared anyway, but she made me feel once more like a novelist supporting himself with an editorial job. Now I could approach Monroe with some assurance of self. I admitted to Laura that this was only a private system of ego polishing. She shrugged and said, "Everybody needs it."

I still wish I had met Dame Edith. Acquaintance might possibly have prospered, via post. I might have had a different sort of letter from her. But I could not have had a letter of such anger and regret, so scintillatingly dashed off.

Shaw conceded that he had been somewhat over-optimistic. To compensate, he got us a foreword to the book by the author of *The Seven Year Itch*, who had adapted his Broadway success for the screen.

II

The dummy picture book was ready, the foreword was ready. Two copies of each. Then the real work began, trying to meet Monroe so that she could give us her approval. Through an intermediary, appointments were made. Through an intermediary, appointments were broken. While waiting, I read everything readable I could find about

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Monroe, including her wretched life as a foster child. All this made me more interested and eager.

The deadline was nearing rapidly, the date by which the book had to go to press if the publication date was to be met. This was to be a paperbound book, and that date had been promised to the distributor of our paperbound editions. If we were late, there would be stickiness.

I had another pressure, personal. My agent had liked my new novel and had sent it to my editor. I was awaiting word. He was not taking an inordinately long time, but anything other than an enthusiastic reply one day after receipt of the manuscript always seemed inordinately long. Laura, who had been through such periods with me before, declined to be nervous or anxious. She was confident all would be well. This attitude could be irritating, which didn't bother her either.

The deadline for the Monroe book began to loom over our office, seemingly blocking out the light of day. At last her intermediary said she would see me, without fail, on Wednesday afternoon at two. On Wednesday morning, my agent telephoned to say that she was having lunch with my editor that day, expected an answer about my novel, and would telephone me after lunch. I explained to her that I would be incommunicado with an author of my own. I asked her to telephone my wife and give her the news. I would call home as soon as I could. I alerted Laura to the plan.

That afternoon, at five to two, I was in the lobby of the Waldorf Towers with a copy of the dummy book. I gave the concierge my name and asked for Miss Monroe. He rang. There was no answer. I knew that she went almost daily to classes at the Actors Studio, and I asked if she had gone out. He said he had seen her go out that morning but his lunch-hour relief had seen her come home a while ago.

I sat and waited fifteen minutes. I asked him to ring again. This time she answered and said she would see me soon. Another fifteen minutes. Another half hour. I clutched the dummy book wetly. Two anvils pressed on me. I had to see her today, had to. I also wanted to telephone Laura for the news that might be waiting. There was no pay phone in the lobby, and I didn't dare go to look for one because in the interim, however brief, Monroe might call down and be cross if I weren't there, or she might go out. I sat, under my two pressures, on broken glass.

At half-past three, an hour and a half after our appointment, she called down to say that she would see me. I hoped that she had been busy, but no one came down in the elevator, and no one was waiting on her floor when I arrived.

I rang the doorbell, and she opened almost at once, blonde and glowing. Also barefoot. She looked as if she had just showered. She was wearing a white terry-cloth robe, tightly belted. The top billowed out just a bit. I wondered if this was to compensate me for my wait. She said nothing about the wait. She just took my hand and drew me inside. At the touch of her hand, my resentment vanished.

It was a two-room suite. This was the living room, and through the open door, I could see the bedroom. I was there on business, of course, but I couldn't help realizing that I was alone in a hotel room with the current sex goddess of the wide, wide world. She was in a bathrobe and barefoot.

But there was another part of my mind. After greetings had been exchanged, the first thing I said, alone with the globe's Aphrodite, was, "May I please telephone my wife?"

She replied, in that breathy voice that had whispered into every male ear on earth, "Sure." Almost with childish pride, she said, "I have two phones. One here and one in there."

I said I would go inside so that I wouldn't disturb her. It would take only a moment, I promised.

I went inside and telephoned Laura. "Guess where I am," I said.

"Where?"

"I'm in Marilyn Monroe's bedroom, sitting on her bed."

"Oh, come *on*," said Laura impatiently.

III

The news from home was good. I went back into the living room, and when my hostess offered me a drink, I felt like having a little whiskey, unusual for me at that time of day. She had an assortment of bottles on the table, and she served me. She drank bottled water. We sat together on a sofa, and I felt trebly incandescent, being with her, knowing my private good news, and the whiskey. I took up

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the book. I showed her the foreword, and I turned the glassine-envelope pages. She nodded and said, "Mm-hm." When I was finished, she said she wanted a few days to think about it. I supposed she wanted to consult someone. Of course, I said, but I mentioned the deadline. We made an appointment for Friday at three. Sam Shaw would be there.

On Friday I was ushered up promptly. Shaw was alone in the living room. He explained that Marilyn was at the Actors Studio and was due back at any moment. He said that Marilyn loved the book but had a few ideas. I said I was anxious to get them, to get anything, so that I could send the book off.

Very soon she came in from her acting class. This time she was not the world's goddess. She wore a sweatshirt and slacks. There was a bit of a belly. The knees were slightly knocked. Her hair looked tired, as if it were exhausted by all that had been done to it through the years, as if it were taking a day off. The best thing about her appearance was that she didn't seem to care about our seeing her like that, off duty.

She was pleasant again, and in a few moments she settled down with me on the sofa, with Shaw seated on a hassock facing us. She held the dummy book, and she turned the pages studiously. For some reason, I got the image of a high school senior turning the pages of her yearbook, even though all the pictures were of herself.

She came to an inserted slip of paper, marking a place. I had included a picture of her sunk back in an easy chair, looking tired after a long day on the set. She said she didn't like it. I said I had wanted to show that filmmaking is hard work.

She shook her head. "When people look at me, they want to see a star." I said the picture would come out.

She had only one other request. A two-page spread had a picture of her at a table with Billy Wilder, the director, captioned "and more conferences": and a shot of her in a boa, looking up at a work-light, captioned "and more publicity photographs." The second one must have been taken on a day that she particularly remembered. She insisted that the caption read "and, while thinking of other things, more publicity photographs." I didn't ask the meaning. I agreed at once.

That was it. The book was done. I asked her for a souvenir, a signed photo. Shaw pulled out a publicity still from *The Seven Year Itch*, a famous shot. She sits on the arm of a gaily striped sofa, wearing a white pantsuit with a wide-collared shirt and tight trousers, holding a drink, her left leg extended, her white, high-heeled, wide-strapped shoe pointing. She is smiling toward the left of the picture. She looks perfect. Like a star.

Shaw gave her a pen, and she asked him what she should write. He told her. She picked up a piece of paper and practiced the inscription. "Thank you, Mr. Stanley Kauffmann, for your sensitive insight. Love and kisses." Then she wrote it on the photo and signed it.

It is hanging on the wall in front of me right now.

IV

I visited her once more. A week or so after the book had gone into production, I was told that she wanted to see me. I went over, was shown up promptly, and found the living room crowded with agents' underlings and advisers on makeup and hair. She was inside with still another hairdresser, I was told, being readied for an appearance at a huge conference in the Waldorf later that afternoon.

About twenty minutes later, one of the makeup women rose to go inside. I asked her to tell Miss Monroe that, as requested, I was here. After a few minutes, the makeup woman opened the bedroom door and beckoned to me. I went to the doorway. Monroe was seated before her dressing-table mirror, lavishly gowned, her hair fluffily but carefully arranged. People were around her. She saw me in the mirror and waved at me as someone did something to her dress. I waved back.

The woman next to me smiled at me and closed the door.

I suppose Monroe had wanted something or other when she sent for me. I'll never know what it was. But at that very moment, in that split second, I promised myself that someday I would write about our encounter. The wave in the mirror, quick, almost apologetic, settled the matter.

The paperbound book came out, called *Marilyn Monroe as the Girl*, which was the only name given to her role in *The Seven Year Itch*. The book didn't sell particularly well. Our excuse to ourselves in the office was that

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people could pick it up at a bookshop or at a newsstand, flip through it, and put it back. We had another excuse: people may have been looking for girlie pictures of Monroe. This was neither a girlie book nor a substantial book.

Time passed. At the end of 1955 I left publishing. Laura and I went to Europe for something over a year. We were in London for about six months at the same time that Monroe was there making a film, but I didn't see her. I made no attempt. I never dreamed of approaching Edith Sitwell. We returned to New York. I went back into publishing. I wrote another novel. I left publishing and never wrote another novel. I concluded that there was a kink in my head that tied novel-writing with editing.

In August 1962 came the news of Monroe's death. Oddly, a few people, who had seen my signed photograph, called me up to console me. They thought I might be desolated. That response would have been a bit grand, I assured them. Still, I felt my own stab of sadness. I remembered our two talks, especially the first afternoon when, though she didn't know it, she shared some good news with me. I saw again the wave in the mirror, like an escaped prisoner who had been recaptured.

There was a touch of pity, too. I remembered how she had kept me waiting in the lobby, and I saw it differently now. She had been getting a child's revenge on a world that had abused, then used her. Now revenge had run out.

I wondered how Dame Edith felt. I wondered if, during Monroe's stay in London, there had been a luncheon party. I hoped so. I still hope so. Sometimes I fantasize about that luncheon. Each in her own way, they are both having a delightful time.

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The True American Sage

J. C. FURNAS

Dooleyites are not mineralogical specimens but members of the Clan-na-Dooley—a smallish, unorganized but articulate group of admirers of a certain Martin J. Dooley, Irish bartender of a saloon "just beyant Hailey's slough" on the West Side of Chicago for some thirty years beginning in 1893. Today's general public is aware of him, if at all, for his having said "Th' Supreme Court follows th' iliction returns"—an oracle illuminating a particular problem as of 1900 but now more cryptic than helpful. His "Thrust ivrybody but cut th' ca-ards," recently cited (without credit) by President Reagan, is more useful but seldom attributed because so few know of its author, let alone of his importance far beyond his one-liners. Dooleyites, however, are chronically grateful for the tidal sweep of the brilliant common sense and imaginative compassion of his several hundred newspaper and magazine pieces of pungent monologue.

Nationally syndicated, then collected into best-selling, appropriately green-bound books, those comments both entertained and chastened a delighted nation in your grandfathers' salad days. And for whipped cream on top, as any Dooleyite will tell you, an amazingly substantial portion of what he said in the Theodore Roosevelt–Andrew Carnegie era still throws joyfully uncanny lights on what goes on now—two generations after *his* creator, Chicago newspaperman Finley Peter Dunne, died full of years and astringent memories.

Thirty years ago an article of mine in the *New York Times Book Review* said that presidential years depress Dooleyites because the old fellow is not leaning his elbows on the bar and explaining to Hinnissy, his straight man, such things as (in 1960 terms) "whether Mr. Nixon should get Checkers back into the act; luscious movie stars shilling for candidates; [Nelson] Rockefeller's instinct to seek cover on hearing the words 'Vice-President.' " Current targets that would have drawn fire most profitably: the census fiasco; the persistent omnipresence of blue jeans in all cultural strata; overstuffed screen and TV credits; the Souter and Bork Supreme Court hearings. *The New Yorker*'s "Talk of the Town" once called Mr. Dooley "the man whose like is most missed in our time."

He spoke the brogue, but Dooleyism is by no means limited to the Irish. We faithful represent ethnic roots scattered even more widely than mine, which are English, Welsh, German, French, with touches of Scottish and Irish and possibly Dutch and Indian. Our prevalent flavor connotes journalists and commonsense academics who recognize class when they see it. I was flattered when the Irish American Heritage Center of Chicago recently asked me to do a paper for a three-day symposium celebrating Mr. Dooley. The assignment unexpectedly swept me into underlining his universal pertinence by enlarging on what I wrote in a large book on America in 1969: "that as between Mark Twain and Mr. Dooley, the latter better fits the notion of a national humorist." Taking a deep breath, I nominated the Sage of Chicago's Archer Avenue to replace the Sage of Hannibal, Missouri, as America's icon of laughter-propelled wisdom.

That, of course, is heresy verging on lèse-majesté. For at least one hundred years Mark Twain has been to America what Robert Burns is to Scotland—a name eliciting reflex

✪ J. C. FURNAS's most recent book is his autobiography, *My Life in Writing: Memoirs of a Maverick.*

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reactions of jolly veneration. Please understand that my purpose is not to belittle Mark Twain in order to secure Mr. Dooley his due. Were I forced to choose only one item from American literature to be saved from the destruction of our planet, it would be the central three-fourths of *Huckleberry Finn*; and nobody ever rejoiced more than I in the monks' newspaper and the West Point examination in *A Connecticut Yankee*. But the disproportion of public esteem between Mr. Dooley and Mark Twain is a cultural grotesque. I know of no public opinion polls on it, but the evidence is there on the reference shelf: *The Encyclopedia Americana* gives Finley Peter Dunne three inches on the column, Mark Twain sixty-five. Bartlett's *Familiar Quotations* has thirteen Dooleys, thirty-seven Mark Twains. In the *Oxford Book of Quotations*—British, true, but Dooley was extremely popular in Britain—the score is one to twenty-four.

The discrepancy is all the stranger because the careers of Samuel Langhorne Clemens and Finley Peter Dunne show numerous parallels and overlapped enough for the two to be not intimate friends but mutually admiring acquaintances. Neither had a silver-spoonish birth and rearing. Neither went to college. The education of each was chiefly newspapering and omnivorous reading. Both preferred Scotch whiskey in considerable quantity but never became alcoholic. After two weeks of the first phase of the Civil War, Clemens deserted and went to California as a noncombatant for the duration. His birth two years after Appomattox exempted Dunne from Civil War service, but he caused Mr. Dooley to recall, on hearing the Southern states had left the Union: " 'Let them go,' I said. 'There's plenty left,' I said." There were several other incidental indications that young Dooley and the mature one, too, found a good deal to be said for Chicago's Copperheadisms.

Clemens and he were both young journalists going East to make the most of sudden national popularity, staying there and prospering signally. British publishers pirated the early works of both. Each had a great talent for friendship among not only fellow writers but also big headliners in politics and finance. And by coincidence each man, fallen on hard times, was rescued by an eminent king of finance from the class that both men had lampooned—and sometimes savagely denounced—in print.

After that, however, parallels give way to the contrasts that make my case. Note my saying "Clemens" and "Dunne" in the foregoing. Justin Kaplan shrewdly called his conscientious study of the former *Mr. Clemens and Mark Twain* to distinguish between Clemens, ill-advised publisher and ill-starred backer of implausible inventions, and Mark Twain, money-hungry star-turn of the lecture circuit as well as celebrant of Tom Sawyer's whitewashed fence. That second self often repossessed him Jekyll-and-Hyde fashion. In his latter days Clemens would walk down Fifth Avenue on Easter Sunday enjoying the way the promenaders whispered to one another on spotting the wavy white mane, bristly mustache, and idiosyncratic white suit of America's funnyman laureate. It is even sounder to distinguish between Peter Dunne, career journalist who dressed exactly like the run of his elegantly tailored friends, and Martin Dooley, that strictly fictional creation as real as Wilkins Micawber, Rebecca Sharp, Long John Silver—and, in my view, Huckleberry Finn.

So the two specimens under my lens are not Clemens and Dunne but their respective offspring, larger than life as their begetters were not. The Dooley figure is all the more effective because all one knows of him beyond his masterly holdings-forth is that he was in his sixties, had white hair and mustache, and was sturdily built but could still be spry on occasion. Great character work needs no reward-poster description. One knows of Becky Sharp only that she was smallish and had green eyes and fair-to-reddish hair.

As to professionalism, the contrasts recall the pair's backgrounds. Both Dunne and Clemens got into writing through newspapering, but the latter's experience was far shorter and in atypical backgrounds—post–Gold Rush mining camps, chaotic San Francisco, then post–Civil War Washington. Clemens always yearned nostalgically after his first career as Mississippi River pilot, and he spent as much of his energy and productive years on lecturing and business as on writing. Dunne began turning out newspaper copy at the age of seventeen on a big-city daily and never looked back. He never thought of himself as anything but reporter-editor-writer and, he hoped, though it never materialized, newspaper publisher. Probably in consequence Clemens's writing standards were looser and

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more amateurish. The Mark Twain hand that wrote the best piece of fiction and some of the funniest stuff ever turned out in America also produced an inordinate amount of wordage ranging from mediocre to Oh-dear horrendous. He was his own worst editor and may have suspected it, often beseeching writer-friends or private intimates to vet his drafts and often meekly accepting their findings. To some extent that could be said of a number of other noted writers. But not of Mr. Dooley, an unimpeachably firm professional of whom E. B. White, an acknowledged prince of American prose, said he "wrote no second-rate stuff." Well, nobody's perfect, but that comes ungodly close to being almost true. It couldn't conceivably be said of Mark Twain.

He and Mr. Dooley are often classified in the "cracker-barrel" school of our national humor—Artemus Ward, Petroleum V. Nasby, Josh Billings, that sort of thing. Mark Twain certainly has a place therein. In Will Rogers and Abe Martin, Kin Hubbard's pithy Hoosier hillbilly syndicated by the *Indianapolis News,* the tradition was still lively in the generation after Dunne. The *Miami Herald* once called Mr. Dooley "the Will Rogers of the early 1900s," which is about like calling Norman Rockwell the American Daumier. No Dooleyite can be comfortable about Mr. Dooley as cracker-barreler. That genre was down-homey, drawly-crackly stuff round the potbellied stove in the crossroads store and had a marked flavor of white Anglo-Saxon hankering after earlier, simpler times. The Clemens who begot Mark Twain belonged therein because he came from an upper Mississippi riverbank settlement just emerging from the backwoods. But Dunne was city-born-and-reared and unabashedly urban-minded. One of Mr. Dooley's finest non-political pieces is "The City as a Summer Resort":

"I must go back," I says, "to th' city," I says, "where there is nawthin' to eat but what ye want an' nawthin' to drink but what ye can buy," I says. "Where the dust is laid be th' sprinklin' cart, where th' ice-man comes reg-lar an' th' roof-garden is in bloom an' ye're waked not be th' sun but be th' milkman," I says. "I want to be near a doctor whin I'm sick an' near eatable food whin I'm hungry, an' where I can put out me hand early in th' mornin' an' hook in a newspaper," says I. "Th' city," says I, "is th' on'y summer resort f'r a man that has iver lived in th' city," I says. . . . "We ought to live where all th' good things iv life comes fr'm," says Hogan. "No," says I, "Th' place to live is where all th' good things in life goes to. . . . Th' cream comes in an' th' skim-milk stays."

Mark Twain bowed his own kind of fiddle better than anybody else, but his virtuosity never matched the way Dooley could strike a lingering chord and spin its elements into a swirling obligato of linked ideas entwined with the genial music of the brogue. And his curveball seldom broke quite as sharp as Dooley's:

"I wonder if two hundred years from now people will cease to talk about William Jennings Bryan. He won't but will they?"

"Most vigytarians I ever see looked enough like their food to be classed as cannibals."

"People tell me to be frank, but how can I whin I don't dare know myself?"

And Dooley's accounts of the Dreyfus scandal—Dunne was an observer there—inimitably packed the whole foul circus into the line he gave the judge: "Th' witness will confine himself to perjuries."

As Barbara Schaaf has pointed out in her valuable book, *Mr. Dooley's Chicago,* to have known the place inside out as the nimble-minded Chicago-reared newspaperman necessarily did was perfect preparation for training Dooley to get the hang of America in general. And once the Spanish-American War brought him into national bloom, he had the savvy to become a one-day-at-a-time, briskly versatile realist weighing up and cutting down to size a vast range of the things going on in an America well started on the frantic urbanization that our century has seen.

Nowadays we deplore what is seen as the ethnic or racial condescension implicit in detailed representation of minority speech such as Dooley's signature-Irish in which Dunne did final revisions of his drafts in standard English. That squeamishness may well be proper. But in Dunne's time, dialect humor was as much the custom of the country as it was for both sexes to wear hats outdoors, and the change, though a good thing, exacts a price in side effects, like so many social improvements. It is a loss, advisable but regrettable, that nobody now is likely to reprint black Genesis's eloquence in Booth Tarkington's *Seventeen* or the East Side English in Milt Gross's *Nize Baby* of only two generations ago. Today's inability—or refusal—to

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countenance typographically explicit dialect is probably one of the reasons why Mr. Dooley has dropped so far out of the general mind.

Dunne once experimented with rewriting some Dooley pieces to eliminate their distortions and elisions. The results read pretty much like "The Interpreter's House" (title borrowed from *The Pilgrim's Progress*), a magazine with several voices commenting on things and people, written by Dunne in the early 1900s. (A good while ago I had the Harvard University Press half-persuaded to reprint them.) They are pretty savory stuff with plenty of plums like: "The great trouble with the man who has annihilated Socialism is that he believes he has justified piracy." But they lacked the integrating effect of Mr. Dooley's personal charisma. As I wrote in reviewing Philip Dunne's invaluable book on his father, absence of the brogue seems to "blur the delicate pace and timing that make Dooley literature as well as farce, satire, wit, and wisdom . . . the slow, clear, warbly Irish voice and the easy slide of the shrewdest humor that America has ever produced."

It may well be, besides, that in Dunne's time the brogue was actually a help toward getting Mr. Dooley so triumphantly accepted. For around the turn of the century anything "Irish" was still by definition amusing. Pat and Mike, begorra, hung on long after the politics of Boston, New York, Chicago, and the sandlots of San Francisco had made "Irish" synonymous with cynical political corruption. Particularly in his first few years Dooley was candid but also so realistically tolerant about that tradition that the effect was stimulating, even entertaining. Nor was he any more flattering about the Bohemians, Swedes, Poles, Germans, and Lake Shore Drive WASPs, the other structural elements of Chicago's Tower of Babel. But the point here is that if Dunne did in part owe his nationwide acceptance to the Irish reference, he may have to some extent repaid the favor. As his range of targets extended into national figures and issues, America's laughter betrayed it into taking cognizance of what an elderly Irish bogtrotter come over in the steerage, former ward heeler in the urban Irish ghetto, now engaged in the socially disreputable trade of barkeep, was saying about the land of the free and the home of the brave. It could be seriously maintained that among the several factors—time, improved economic status, and so on—that gradually lifted the social onus from Irish-Americans, Martin Dooley's omnipresent example of defiantly Irish integrity, intelligence, and goodwill had at least a subliminal place. Whether his creator had something of the sort in mind is unlikely. But one can dream of how Mr. Dooley would have elaborated on his astonishment, gratification, disbelief—and probably suspicions of classic returns-juggling—on learning that Honey Fitz's grandson would inhabit the White House.

Dooley was no stage Irishman, however, nor yet a worthy nephew of his Uncle Mike, the Fenian. He was sympathetic to the Archey Road's urge to throw chunks of hard coal at Orangemen's processions: "England will niver free Ireland," he told Hinnissy, "but some day, if we make it inthrestin' enough f'r her, she'll have to free England iv Ireland." But most of the time he confined himself to needling the British when, as in the Boer War, they seemed to be asking for it. Commenting on Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, he wrote: Britain "has extinded her domain till th' sun niver sets on it. No more do th' orig'nil owners of th' sile, bein' kept movin' be th' polis." And he had a great time when the brand-new U.S. Navy elected the United States to the World Powers' Club and certain condescending Britons and upper-crust Anglophile Americans proposed a hands-across-the-sea Anglo-Americanism that ignored the heterogeneity of the American population:

> "You an' me," Mr. Dooley told Hinnissy, "has got to bring on this here Anglo-Saxon 'lieance. An Anglo-Saxon is a German who forgot who was his parents. . . . Teddy Rosenfelt is another Anglo-Saxon. And I'm an Anglo-Saxon. . . . [M]e old friend Domingo . . . will march at the head of th' Dago Anglo-Saxons whin th' time comes. . . . Th' Bohemian an' Pole Anglo-Saxons may be a little slow wakin' up to what our pa-apers calls our common hurtage, but they'll be all right whin called on. . . . Whin th' Binny Brith an' Afro-Americans an' th' other Anglo-Saxons raise th' Anglo-Saxon battle-cry it'll be all day with th' eight or nine people that has th' misfortune iv not bein' brought up Anglo-Saxon."

When Theodore Roosevelt won the 1904 election, Mr. Dooley remarked on how "Th' English pa-apers wint almost crazy with approval. Says wan iv thim: 'Rosenfelt is not a

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statesman in th' English sinse. He wud not compare with our Chamberlains. He is iv more vulgar type . . . a coarse and uncultivated man. But in America he stands high f'r taste an' larnin'. He regards his iliction as a great triumph f'r th' Anglo-Saxon race."

All that despite the immense enthusiasm with which Britons welcomed Mr. Dooley's stuff and Dunne in person. He made and kept many good friends over there. Thirty years earlier the same social strata had gone similarly head over heels about Mark Twain's early writing and Clemens in person. His gurgles of pleasure and adulation for his hosts were practically schoolgirlish; whereas Democrat or Republican, muckraker or reactionary, cleric or layman, Mr. Dooley knew no favorites. When he wrote that Rough-Riding Theodore Roosevelt's book about the Spanish-American War should have been titled *Alone in Cuba*, Roosevelt, much to his credit, made a close friend of Dunne anyway. But Mr. Dooley kept right on spinning sardonic mileage out of President Roosevelt as often as he did out of William Jennings Bryan and John D. Rockefeller (" . . . a kind iv a society f'r th' privintion iv croolty to money. If he finds a man misusin' his money he takes it away fr'm him an adopts it. Ivry Saturday night he lets th' man see it f'r a few hours . . . ").

It was such considerations that led me to depose Mark Twain from the office of National Sage. *The American Heritage Dictionary* defines a "sage" as "usually an elderly man, venerated for his experience, judgment and wisdom." That describes a balanced, mature person. Several decades of experience as writer-for-print did not keep Mark Twain's career from increasing incidence of ill-fated writing projects and verbal tantrums because first democracy, then the human race, then the universe didn't suit him. He developed what Justin Kaplan justly calls "a shrill, philosophically narrow nihilism." His late fictions were brittle fables of devil-haunted despair. He lacked the emotional governor necessary to the dictionary-stipulated judgment and wisdom that make sages.

Mr. Dooley, however, had something like wisdom riding herd on his flair for pretentious folly and moral camouflage. Not that he was a word-mincer. When he hauled off on Chicago's Yerkes or Pullman or Baer of the anthracite coal oligarchy he made a vigorous most of the whip of scorpions that he kept under the bar with the bung-starter. But he reached for it very seldom. He preferred the X-ray of wit and the accuracy of deft syntax. He sometimes puts me in mind of the phrase "who saw life steadily and saw it whole." But that tag from Matthew Arnold is too solemn. Dooley's favorite reading was Montaigne, the most genial and profound of skeptics, whose qualities rubbed off on him:

"Th' constitooshin guarantees me th' right to live, but I die; to liberty, but if I try bein' too free, I'm locked up; and to th' pursoot iv happiness, but happiness has th' right to run whin pursood, an' I've niver bin able to tree her yet."

There is the sort of mind and tone of voice needed in a National Sage.

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In Defense of Orphanages

CHARLES D. ARING

I took up residence in an orphanage a few days before my seventh birthday and remained there until the age of fifteen and a half, a total of eight and a half years. I was a full orphan by reason of my father's desertion before my birth and my mother's death in her forty-ninth year. I have no memory of having seen my father. During the year after my mother's death, I was assigned to two foster homes seriatim, which involved my attending four primary schools during my sixth and seventh years. I was tolerated at these homes until I could be moved along. I can recall little in the way of masculine influence during my first six years until I got to the orphanage, which may account for my slow acclimatization there. It was a rough, tough existence after the totally feminine environment of my earliest years.

It has not been considered particularly advantageous to spend one's formative years in an orphanage. The immediate experience made me actively dislike almost everything about it. Nowadays, the phasing out of orphanages has thinned the ranks of the alumni.

Orphanages have fallen into desuetude after struggling along under a Dickensian cloud. The foster home has largely replaced the orphanage. The social service attitude routinely supports the primacy of the nuclear family, no matter how disorganized it may be. Social problems these days are dealt with less on principle than on the basis of cost. But I doubt whether orphanages were more expensive per capita than other modes of child care.

Before all witnesses and memories disappear, I want to record the debits and credits of the orphanage I knew and draw some conclusions about the care and nurture of children without parents. My experience was garnered in the second decade of this century. A long career in teaching enables me to know how disconcerting to some people this ancient history may be; I have in mind those who always trust what is new and feel contempt for what is old. But history has its uses nonetheless—if only the satisfaction of curiosity.

To begin with fundamentals, the orphanage food was simple, coarse, and, as I recall, insufficient. Meals were closer to feeding than to dining. Our meager fare can be inferred from the invariable Christmas gift: an apple or an orange; the child who got an orange was considered lucky. But I recall no obesity in this population in children or staff. This was surely an advantage owing to what might otherwise be construed as a debit. Food limitation in childhood may indeed have something to do with setting the "appestat" (by analogy with thermostat) control.

Clothing was likewise plain. The boys' uniform included blue overalls, suggesting in its way our minority status. A blue short-trousered, serge suit was the emblem of confirmation in Sunday school at the age of fourteen; I do not remember what happened to it after the ceremony—very likely it wore out. But I do remember attending high school in the cast-off trousers of a mailman's uniform, and that did not help me to be self-confident.

The administration during most of my residence consisted of a childless couple. The husband had advanced (if that is the word) to the superintendency of the orphanage from a job as a teamster: he drove a local beer wagon. His main qualification for his new post was that he was himself an alumnus of the institution. His education could not have been be-

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yond the elementary school level, if that, and his wife was unable to read or write. The women caretakers were also uneducated but kindly. A board of directors met periodically and were not, as a group, intellectually impressive.

Discipline was strict, as I suppose it had to be with a hundred charges, six to fourteen years of age, about equally divided between girls and boys. Much of the work of the institution fell to the children under the supervision of the caretakers, the superintendent, and the matron. It was mainly drudgery, although some of the older children became adept at such things as shoe repairing, sewing, and mechanic's work.

Two superintendents followed one another during my residence at the orphanage, the first, not long after my arrival, having been dismissed for molesting some of the older girls. This brings up the subject of sexual education: it was nonexistent, except as normal children somehow pick up such things. The sexes were kept segregated, and all forms of sexual expression rigidly suppressed. This did not prevent an occasional roll in the bushes, which we heard about through the grapevine when the couple was apprehended. I was too naive to get involved in conduct contrary to the rules. My report cards from elementary school suggest that I was considered a good boy with frequent *E*'s (excellent) for conduct and effort.

It can be imagined that education was not a priority in the establishment. There were bound to be some exceptional children among the lot, but intellectual achievement was neither stressed nor rewarded. The children knew who the achievers were without help or sign from the administration.

Religious training, which was wholly rote learning, occupied almost the whole of Sunday. The children were marched to the neighboring German Evangelical Lutheran Church in a long line, just as they were marched to school. It was there that I was fortunate enough to be assigned to the best teacher of my early years. Somehow she led me to appreciate the Bible as literature. But the appalling sermons in English or German, like the other religious exercises routinely performed at the orphanage, guaranteed my agnostic outlook as an adult. The vaccination, so to speak, took. Perhaps this perfunctory religious training had the benefit of preventing prejudice, religious or social.

From these various defects it should not be inferred that I was unappreciative of the home I was given, and I turn now to the credits. The shelter was secure, and the environment neat and clean, owing mainly to our own efforts under steady supervision. No task was considered too menial for us to take on and be held responsible for. "Goofing off" was unknown and malingering unthought of. Discipline was strict, and we strove to keep out of trouble's way. Punishment in the form of work could be prolonged until a replacement arrived by virtue of another's misdeed. There were no really bad guys among us, which reminds me that I know nothing about the admissions policy. Whatever it was, it seems to have excluded the problem child. It also seems to me that disturbed children were much less common than today. I do not recall any such children in the eight grades of a very mixed elementary school.

The business of childhood is play; at the orphanage it was of course limited by all the work that had to be done about the place. At the same time it was an advantage to have so many playmates at hand for every kind of game. And we played every kind, without much equipment—we simply made do. Exciting ball games were had with an old rubber ball and a broomstick (it sharpened the batting eye). I became adept at constructing hard baseballs by winding the unravelings of a worn-out stocking over a rubber core, such as a ball used for playing jacks. Leather covers were salvaged from old baseballs, and these I knew how to stitch. Later, I had no trouble making the baseball team since I could always hit, thanks to this stickball training. My poliomyelitic lower limb was a handicap, to be sure, but not enough to keep me off the team.

We also made up games, such as the competitive stalking and catching of cicadas. We termed them locusts and garnered considerable lore about the habits and life cycle of this beautiful insect, to say nothing of its facility for tree climbing, which, like so much else, was forbidden.

Another plus was the brass band. Though quite young, I was given the cymbals to play, then moved to the alto horn as soon as I could manage it, and finally to the slide trombone. The younger children were instructed mainly by the older, although there was a bandmaster—a member of the orchestra in one of the local picture houses. Musical engagements

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away from the orphanage compound afforded us a respite from the routines and chores. We marched in parades, including the one for the Liberty Loan of the First World War, and we played at flag raisings as well as at other festivals. Eventually I became deeply interested in classical music, most likely as a result of this early haphazard musical experience.

The orphanage had a bit of a library, and I believe I read all that was in it. I had begun reading at the age of three or four, perhaps at my invalid mother's knee, and the taste for books may have been fostered by the physical limitations that followed the poliomyelitis that I contracted at the age of one year. The orphanage library was composed of books of the Frank Merriwell, Tom Swift, Rover Boys, and Horatio Alger genre. My experience leads me to recommend any sort of reading for young children; they will choose as they develop. Once begun, reading becomes a habit. When I got to high school, some use of the public library was possible, on the way to or from school, though nobody at the orphanage showed interest in whether we read or not.

Perhaps the most useful feature of the place was the camaraderie amongst the children and the variety of older boys. This was not part of the program; rather, it was a natural development in that setting. Not long after my joining the institution, one of the older boys "took my part," as it was termed. Up to that time I had lived under feminine influence, and I was lame to boot, which tended to attract the unfavorable attention of other children. It made a difference to those tempted to torment if they had to deal with one of the larger boys of the "family."

If not a family, we were a clan and would close ranks in competitions with children outside the walls. They were the "English kids," in contrast to our designation as "German protestant orphans." We usually prevailed in snowball fights (more fun than fight), baseball, boxing, and other athletic events. It made up for our social inferiority. I had a few friends among the "English kids," but many more among my fellow orphans.

The superlative merit of the institution was the great good health that prevailed among us during my entire tenure. This was the major benefit conferred by my life in an orphanage; it set a pattern and perhaps influenced my eventual choice of occupation as well. I had come from an unhealthy environment: my mother had been an invalid practically since my birth. Her mother, who was also ill, died during my second or third year. She and my mother's younger sister, both subject to repeated depressions, often required hospital care.

At the orphanage, everyone was *expected* to be healthy—and usually we were. There was a sick room and a "nurse" on the premises, but aside from contagious diseases and some cuts and bruises, there was little illness. I myself had chicken pox, sustained a lacerated scalp in a fall owing to my own foolishness, sprained my ankle while sledding, and that was all. During my more than eight years of residence, there were no deaths. I remained healthy thereafter, except for a few iatrogenic ills. Evidently we confirmed the thesis enunciated by the English poet and satirist Charles Churchill:

> The surest road to health, say what they will,
> Is never to suppose we shall be ill;
> Most of those evils we poor mortals know,
> From doctors and imagination flow.

Had I derived nothing more from my orphan life than the reversal of my family legacy of poor health, the experience would have been worth it. That I was made wary of wine, women, and smoking, I suppose, was mainly because of penury, although strict admonitions may also have had something to do with it.

I can count other benefits, one of them being the necessity of learning a second language—German. Surely one of the great defects of public education in this country is indifference to languages, including our own. Ludwig Wittgenstein, as I recently discovered, supplies the rationale for my conviction. "The limits of my language," he writes, "mean the limit of my world."

I am not sure by what factors maturity was skewed, as it certainly was, by orphanage life. Adolescence was curbed, certainly, and its manifestations mishandled or not handled at all. But early acceptance of responsibility was continually reinforced, and that was a good thing. Generally, the more responsibility given to normal children, the more responsible they become. On the other hand, our life did little for socialization outside the group; I was quite inhibited on leaving the protective walls, and forever after tended to substitute institutions for personal contact.

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The development of talent, too, was neglected. The half-orphan had a better chance if the surviving parent took care to make up for the total lack of intellectual stimulation. I was not aware of any advantage because of being a whole-orphan until after I had left, when I came to realize that it was possible to undertake the care and nurture of the self.

After "graduating" from the orphanage, educational and occupational opportunities were inversely proportional to the number of one's relatives. And their problems might well augment the burden. Within the orphanage, a surviving parent could convey a measure of comfort merely by being. But when the parent resumed responsibility for a child in his early teens, the change was fraught with risk, not the least of which was to deal emotionally with the original abandonment.

So I found an advantage in being a whole-orphan. I noticed that few of the children who were predominantly half-orphans continued their education on leaving the institution, usually because of the presence of a surviving parent. He or she may have remarried and was apt to enlist the support of the child rather than the other way around. In any case, this parent was no more adequate emotionally or financially than when he or she first relinquished the child.

What is more, once out of the orphanage, which was located in the suburbs, the youngster often found himself living in one of the slums of the city, and suddenly exposed to the dangers that he had been shielded from by walls and regulations. All too often this devastating pressure in mid-adolescence—Shakespeare's "the ambush of young days"—was more than the child could overcome. I was lucky to find myself domiciled and in the shadow of another large institution (the Cincinnati General Hospital), which brought into my ken a whole host of behavior models.

What about orphan children today? For the orphan, like the poor, is always with us. Having seen so many of my fellows fall by the wayside, my main concern is, How can opportunity be provided for the child to fulfill his potential? Considering the problem historically, I know of no better scheme than that of Girard College in Philadelphia. It is no doubt the outstanding orphanage in the United States. There the primary goal has been the education and training of the children to the full extent of their talents. Plainly, orphans everywhere should, after primary and secondary schooling, receive vocational training if not interested or equipped for a college education.

The Girard program was drafted well over a century and a half ago by Stephen Girard (1750–1831), a self-made international trader who was reputed to be the wealthiest man in the American colonies. He put his mind to the care of orphans when drawing up his last will and testament at the age of seventy-six, and revised it in his eightieth year. The college opened on January 1, 1848.

To achieve his purposes, Girard gave a generous endowment and left little to chance in its use. The details of his plan were clearly spelled out. It needs little in the way of modernization, save for conforming to changes in the law of the land, as has been pointed out by John Keats in "The Legend of Stephen Girard," an article first published in 1978 in *American Heritage*. Girard's philosophy of nurture for orphaned children is as valid today as it was 164 years ago.

Girard College accepts normal children, whole-orphans or half-orphans, between the ages of six and eleven. The college now consists of seventeen buildings on forty-three acres. Currently there are more than five hundred children there, a third of whom are girls. The school maintains high educational credentials. Mental and physical health are evaluated carefully before admission. Girard's non-denominational chapel is held twice weekly. The students may attend religious congregations of their choice off campus. There are courses in comparative religion in the curriculum.

Every opportunity is afforded by a large enthusiastic faculty for students to develop to the extent of their capacity. From the day of admission, it is expected that the student will go on to a university, and practically all of them do go on scholarships underwritten by Girard. Similar arrangements are made for graduate school.

The program directs orphans toward what should be a gratifying life. Girard has graduated a host of successful persons. One development is an enthusiastic and vigorous alumni association. Girard is a happy ship for those who have had the exceptional good fortune of boarding and partaking in Mr. Girard's great concept. But what of those who for any reason cannot partake in a legacy according to Mr. Girard's grand design?

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Looking forward, I, too, have dreamed of an institution for the future. I can imagine a facility for housing not only orphan children but also a limited number of healthy elders who might be interested in their own development after retiring. It should be a facility modeled on the extended family of bygone years, particularly as it existed in rural areas. The administration would represent the middle generation, the children being the younger generation. In my scheme, the opportunity for communication between the generations should be always available. Some elders would want none of it. This is quite understandable. By definition my retreat would select naturally the sort of clientele that would foster its program. From the standpoint of mental health, the availability of younger generations to older and vice versa is useful and beyond dispute. Children and the elderly are natural allies.

To keep the extended family going, incentive programs could be set up in which the children and the retired folk would participate under the supervision of the middle generation serving as the administrators. The elders, expert by reason of experience in one or another discipline or technique, would be ready-made personnel for instruction and recreation. Not only literacy but art and music could be taught and practiced under their tutelage. Members of such an extended family would form friendships and groupings, by free choice and affinity, which would be lasting, a family unit in the best sense.

The pattern of an extended family "home" would resemble the real world more than the usual modern concentration of a single generation. Its clientele would be exposed to the quirks, vagaries, pleasures, ills, and interests of persons of all varieties of age, personality development, competence, and health. It goes without saying that such an establishment would require wise administration. That of the usual immuring institutions as we know them would not fill the bill. The best administrative talent has not gravitated to orphanages and retirement homes. The prevalent oppressive social philosophy of economism, which views human life in terms of production, acquisition, and distribution of wealth, has not dealt kindly with persons at the extremes of the age scale. But there they are and will always be. They deserve better than our heedless age has managed to organize for their well-being.

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Politically Correct Psychology

JOSEPH ADELSON

Let us see if you can guess the audience to which the following was addressed: "Children and Families of the American Empire—Growing Up in the Context of Unsurpassed National Power, Violence and Moral Righteousness." One might imagine *Mother Jones* or the *Village Voice*. Not at all. It is the title of a talk given at the annual convention of the American Orthopsychiatric Association, an organization once devoted to scientific and clinical advances in developmental psychiatry. That is no longer so. Its convention is as much given over to politics as to mental health. Many of its members feel there is little difference between the two, all personal misfortune owing to poverty, racism, warmongering, and the like. Just about half of the study groups at the last annual meeting were devoted to political topics—for example, nuclear issues.

Now how about this passage from an article on the Nicaraguan election? "We believe that the United States bears the major responsibility for the defeat to the FSLN. . . . The contra War, funded largely by the U.S., added to the poverty by slowing production, by sabotage, by diverting funds from civilian uses, and by killing teachers and technicians key to economic development." Its venue is even more surprising—a newsletter sent to psychologists in private practice, which keeps its readers up-to-date on legal and legislative news that might affect them. The article itself had nothing to do with psychology or psychotherapy, Nicaraguan or otherwise, nor did it pretend to. It was a straightforward Sandinista tract, written by a group of psychologists who went to Managua to celebrate an assured victory; are now disappointed and aggrieved, but without second thoughts. They are at pains to tell us that all eighteen of them lived and traveled together, and all eighteen wrote the paper, collectively. (The prose is just about what you would imagine it to be.)

These examples reflect an important, though largely unnoticed, development within psychology: the capture of many of its institutions and much of its scholarship by the forces of political correctness. Not too long ago psychology had in place an immune system that could resist the more virulent intrusions of ideology. It was never very powerful, yet never as feeble as it has become in the last few years. It is now a mark of merit when psychologists exhibit their political parti pris, even when they purport to speak not for themselves alone but for the discipline as a whole. Psychologists now feel entitled to a claim, as scientific experts, on the resolution of policy disputes. It is a trend that has received little attention, perhaps because it has been overshadowed by the flamboyancies we now see in the humanities. Nothing written in psychology has (as yet) matched the panache of the now-famous paper presented at the Modern Language Association convention—"Jane Austen and the Masturbating Girl." Psychology is far more somber, as befits its parvenu/arriviste status in the sciences. For that very reason, its politicization may be more troubling in the long run.

The quickest way to grasp what is happening is to examine some recent issues of the *Monitor*, an official publication of the American Psychological Association. It is a newspaper of tabloid size, sent monthly to all members, most of it given over to news of the organization and of psychology as a profession. Political stories, once occasional—for

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example, a piece praising Cuba's social services—now appear in every issue, indeed in a special section devoted to them. Let us look at three representative stories from the last few months.

Shortly after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the arrival of U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia, the *Monitor* carried a long story on what psychology could contribute to a solution. Various peace researchers were quoted, most of them hinting or stating openly that the crisis was America's fault. As one researcher put it, we Americans "are not well-trained in achieving our objectives short of war." Our problem, we were told, is that for some reason we think of Saddam Hussein as an enemy and fail to employ what is called "realistic empathy"—that is, seeing things from his point of view. It is a familiar refrain. Much the same case was made, by many of the same experts, during the nuclear-freeze era, when it was held that the Cold War was contrived by the United States, a bloodthirsty nation intent on world conquest and unable to understand Soviet intentions, which were peaceful. The "demonizing" of our adversaries by our leaders is often commented on by peace psychologists, who recommend "de-demonizing." The current president of the leading peace group, Psychologists for Social Responsibility, is best known for his efforts to portray Yassir Arafat as sincere but misunderstood, deeply committed to a just peace with Israel.

What strikes us most in the *Monitor*'s account is its one-sidedness. We are told a great deal about the American penchant for military aggression but nothing at all about Iraq's—nothing about its war crimes in Kuwait, or its use of poison gas against its Kurdish minority, or its threats against all its neighbors, such as its declared intention to incinerate all Israelis. The horrors of its occupation of Kuwait were not then fully known, but any sentient psychologist should have been able to predict them, and some did. But peace researchers were so mesmerized by their belief in our national wickedness that they would not see what was plain to the ordinary citizen. Our discipline has learned a great deal about pathological personalities, such as that of Saddam Hussein, and what may be expected from them, yet the *Monitor*'s story made no effort to seek out that knowledge and report it, preferring instead to follow peace psychology in its call on us to empathize with the grievances of a mass murderer.

On the very next page of the same issue, we learn that the American Psychological Association opposes the movement to make English our official language. A commission appointed to study the matter has reviewed the evidence and finds that an extended period of bilingual education produces better learning in children who speak another language. The story (and the commission report itself) characterizes the opposition as inspired by what they term "racist" and "anti-immigrant" sentiments. That xenophobia is widespread among Americans, it clearly hints, for it advises activists to avoid public referendums on the issue.

The bias in this account is even more disturbing than the *Monitor*'s one-sided treatment of the war. There are other sources of information about Saddam Hussein, but not many about bilingual education. Hence we are an easy mark for a commission made up of "experts," which tells us that its conclusions are backed by definitive research and that to think otherwise is to ally oneself with an assemblage of rubes and racists. We do not surmise that it is a stacked commission dealing from a stacked deck, much given to citing the work done by its own members, while ignoring—not repugning, simply ignoring—a wealth of contrary evidence. Reading that evidence—it can be found in a trenchant survey by Abigail Thernstrom—makes it plain that the common disaffection has little to do with racism but is instead a realistic reaction to a status quo that leaves a great many youngsters unable to learn English and often enough backward in all realms of learning. A more extended account can be found in Rosalie Porter's book *Forked Tongue*, which tells the story of her disillusionment, as a bilingual teacher, with how those children were being taught, asking why it was "that so many of my fifth and sixth grade students—who had never been out of the mainland United States . . . had not yet learned enough English to be taught their subjects in English." She set out on a voyage of discovery that led to extensive research on the issues, a doctorate, and to establishing new and highly effective programs in bilingual teaching. The reason most programs do so poorly by their students is to be found in her book's subtitle: *The Misleading Politics of Bilingual Education*." A great many of them spawn bureaucracies whose aim is to keep a failing system alive, by ethnic intimidation when necessary. Dr. Porter has

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some chilling stories to tell of the hardball politics played against her, including an effort to sabotage the awarding of the doctoral degree she had earned. None of these squalid political realities are addressed or even recognized in the commission's report or the *Monitor*'s account of it. Even were we to grant that the commission has a case, there is an equally good case on the other side, but it is banished from the report.

Another recent issue carries several accounts of a mini-convention on homelessness that was a featured event at the national meetings of the Association. The stories emphasize the economic and social causes of homelessness and hammer away at what is held to be the mistaken idea that psychological problems are paramount. The homeless are said to be the victims of poverty, racism, and callous economic policy. Complaints are voiced about the government's stress on such determinants as substance abuse or psychosis.

Once again, all contrary evidence has vanished. No one doubts that economic privation plays a role, but no one who has looked at the research will question that a substantial majority of the homeless suffer from serious psychological problems—not only psychosis, but also severe personality disorders, alcoholism, drug abuse, and so on—problems of such magnitude and persistence that the homeless are unable to hold jobs and otherwise cope for themselves. The evidence is neither recondite nor hidden. A recent study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, which carried out careful diagnoses, found that nearly half of the sample suffered from major mental illness, that two-thirds of the men were alcoholic, and so on. There are three recent books, all widely reviewed, about how the gutting of the mental hospitals, along with other enlightened social policies, flooded the streets and overwhelmed our social services. It is galling to one's professional pride to pick up the local newspaper and find that Mike Royko, the humor columnist from Chicago, writing on homelessness, has so much better a grasp of both the statistics and its social dynamics than so many of those whose speciality it is.

On all these issues—war and peace, bilingualism, homelessness, as well as a great many others (abortion, affirmative action, AIDS, homosexuality, women's oppression, women's depression, male violence) the *Monitor* is monotonic, unable to report more than one point of view. But should the news be troubling ideologically, other voices are somehow available. We have an example in the January issue, which features a story on Thomas Bouchard's research on identical twins reared apart, a study that received considerable attention upon its publication in *Science*, and for good reason. It had been able to locate a larger number of such cases than had previously been found and had tested them more extensively. The findings put one more nail in the already studded coffin of environmentalism, by showing a strong genetic influence on a wide variety of traits once thought to be entirely the result of family or social influence—for example, traditionalism.

The long *Monitor* story headlines this research as "controversial" and sets about interviewing people who are critical of it. If we read carefully enough, we soon learn that the findings are not at all controversial. To the contrary, the common complaint is that the findings are well established, some critics feeling that *Science* should not have published it on that account. That unfairly devalues Bouchard's contribution, but the point is that there is no credible criticism of the study's validity. It would be controversial only to a Rip Van Winkle, someone who slept through the last two decades, thus missing the emergence of a sophisticated geneticism in such domains as severe mental illness, intelligence, and, more recently, personality and temperament. It is a profound change, and one that is here to stay. It will not be wished away, nor will it be washed away by clever deconstructions. It forces us to think differently, to give up the "persistent misunderstanding of human nature," the shallow optimism, which Reinhold Niebuhr saw as entrenched among psychologists and social scientists and which he felt "belongs to the deepest pathos of our age."

The story on identical twins reflects almost perfectly the split, and the consequent confusions, of the *Monitor* cast of mind, by which I mean the perspectives of the "progressive" social science it reflects so faithfully. Alas, there is all that hard science coming out of neuropsychology and biological psychiatry and biogenetics that it must report; yet its heart belongs to what is politically familiar—

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the slogans about poverty, racism, sexism, corporate greed, the national blood lust—which it was raised on and which it transmits, mechanically, to all who will listen. Appropriately enough, the issue of the *Monitor* featuring the twins study also has a long account of the career of George Albee, former president of the American Psychological Association, whom they label "the guru of prevention." He had his epiphany back in the 1950s, to the effect that mental illness is due to "poverty, prejudice, unemployment, and the like." He has not changed his mind since and dismisses the idea that "biochemical and brain defects" have much to do with it. That is what conservatives believe, he tells us, because it means that "you don't have to change society, you don't have to do anything about injustice and prejudice and poverty and homelessness and powerlessness."

Platitude after platitude, and we can be sure that were you to ask just how society ought to be changed, and precisely how that would extinguish mental illness, one would hear another stream of platitudes. We are given not learned discourse, but a mantra that, chanted earnestly enough, sustains the faith and drowns out new knowledge. Poverty has in fact been tested and found wanting as a determinant of mental illness. If we were to eliminate it we would surely eliminate much human misery, but certainly not mental illness itself. While that mantra was being chanted, almost all of the new information discovered during the last two decades came from the side of biology, as any reading of the scientific journals makes plain.

Unfortunately the belief in the extrinsic—the poverty-racism-violence complex—dominates official psychology's approach to public policy. As we have seen, homelessness is due to poverty, official English tainted by racism, the war with Iraq an expression of the national bent for violence. The American Psychological Association (APA) now tells us that depression in women is a result of "being female" in our society, which turns out to mean the result of poverty, racism, and violence, and similar external concerns. It is a formulation that, to put it charitably, is simpleminded, among other things ignoring the fact that high rates of female depression are found in all societies and throughout the last two centuries—hence, a universal, not unlike the universally high rate of alcoholism (and much else) in men. But such universals are ignored, at best passed over quickly, lest they call attention to intrinsic biological differences associated with gender.

Not too long ago the *New York Times Magazine* carried a story on the Modern Language Association, wherein a young teacher of English at Princeton, utterly enchanted with himself, boasted that he was manipulating the minds of the children of the ruling class. We are right to believe him. That is just what is happening in the teaching of the humanities. Psychology shares that aim, and another one as well, a more immediate one, to influence public policy by offering what it believes to be definitive scientific advice.

That project expands relentlessly, each week bringing another issue for which advice is urgently needed, proffered, and publicized. It is rarely good advice and often very bad advice. How could it be otherwise? Even if it were to be given in good faith, it would be inadequate to its ambitions. Psychology is simply too primitive a discipline to help us much in solving even simple social problems, let alone complex ones—though one would not suppose so from reading its press releases. What makes matters worse is that the advice is tailored to the political outcome sought. We know beforehand what the "findings" will show. When the Persian Gulf crisis began, you knew how the *Monitor* would handle it—which experts would be sought out for comment, what dire warnings they would give. Or consider the highly publicized American Psychological Association report on women and depression. The advisory council for that supposedly scientific survey contained, inter alia, Representatives Patricia Schroeder and Barbara Boxer. Are you surprised that the report is a smug confirmation of feminist doctrine?

One would like to believe that one of these days the jig will be up, the public will catch on, legislators and judges will cast a cold eye on the *amicus* briefs and the task force reports and the congressional testimony. But no sign of that yet. No one keeps score; memories are short; above all, the advice given—no matter how worthless scientifically—has the supreme virtue of serving the elite culture's ideological purposes.

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SCIENCE

Publishing the New Biology

GORDON N. GILL

In 1953 James Watson and Francis Crick published a one-page article in the journal *Nature* describing the double helix structure of DNA. The article of April 25, 1953, began with the unassuming sentences: "We wish to suggest a structure for the salt of deoxyribose nucleic acid (D.N.A.). This structure has novel features which are of considerable biological interest." From the X-ray diffraction data of Maurice Wilkins and Rosalind Franklin and the base composition data of Erwin Chargaff, they deduced and modeled the correct structure of the fundamental genetic material of life. The article ends with one of the most famous understatements in history: "It has not escaped our notice that the specific pairing we have postulated immediately suggests a possible copying mechanism for genetic material." That the most profound discovery in biology since Charles Darwin's recognition of biological evolution could be stated in less than a page, with six literature citations on a second, was so remarkable that scientific literature has never since been the same. Not only did the double helix issue in the age of modern molecular biology and genetics, but also its announcement was a precedent against which subsequent scientific literature would be judged.

The arguments for the opposite pole of scientific writing were cogently stated by Richard Feynman in his lecture on Cargo Cult Science, a phrase he used to describe the behavior of the South Seas island people who, having observed the arrival of airplanes full of goods during the Second World War, subsequently arranged a runway with fires along its borders, a wooden hut, and a bamboo headdress shaped like radio headphones and tried, by imitating the form, to cause the planes to land and deliver more goods. Although the form appeared correct, the planes did not land, and Feynman contrasted this to the utter honesty of valid scientific inquiry. He advised the CalTech students in publishing an experiment to "report everything you think might make it invalid—not only what you think is right about it: other causes that could possibly explain your results; and things you thought of that you've eliminated by some other experiment; and how they worked—to make sure the other fellow can tell they have been eliminated." Inclusion of rationale and controls—both positive and negative—in one page just is not feasible unless one wishes to reduce the whole thing to microfilm.

With the explosion in technologies of molecular biology has come an explosion of new insights and information about life processes and an explosion of journals and research articles describing them. All types of retrieval systems have emerged from journals devoted solely to "current contents," listing the tables of contents of journals to computer subscription services and computerized literature searches every student must learn to master. Despite the ability to track and retrieve the thousands of articles related to any topic, I suspect the way most scientists operate is to follow a limited number of journals knowing that the most relevant original material is likely to appear there. In response to the massive proliferation in the number of scientific journals containing thousands of articles, a few journals have become the headliners of the novel and original, and most journals have

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become archival, back shelves of the library to consult when you are really interested in all of the details.

In the biological sciences, three journals have become preeminent: *Nature, Science,* and *Cell*—and it is certain these cannot publish articles both emulating Watson and Crick's one-pager and following Feynman's advice. How can any author who surely has something less original and fundamental to report than the double helix structure of DNA argue for more than a page? How can he present, and his readers believe, his results and conclusions if the methods and controls are not included? This is no trivial problem in scientific communication.

Although the dominance of a small number of scientific journals offers one way through the mass of experimentation, much of which must be derivative, it has created some interesting problems. Not only has it necessitated a remarkably streamlined way of presenting what may represent several years of work by many scientists without full exegesis, but it has placed in the hands of a small group of editors the power to shape, at least in part, the value scale of questions addressed, to define the borders of the unknown, and thus to influence scientific thinking. What may be a service in guiding one through the jungle of information overload, of experiments that merely confirm an observation in another system or reach a known conclusion by another route, has the potential to affect the distribution of research grant support and thus work actually done—and the potential to advance or retard academic careers, not to speak of science itself.

A wonderful *New Yorker* cartoon depicts two tweedy and obviously academic types looking at an obituary on a bulletin board. The caption goes: "Too bad about old Ainsworth. Published and published, but perished all the same." That may be true about life, but as far as academic advancement in science is concerned the dictum publish or perish has never been more true. But publish what and where? Francis Crick, whom most acknowledge as the greatest mind engaged in modern biology, recently spoke at my university. The man who introduced him remarked that Crick had just published his eighty-seventh article. When one considers the remarkable concepts addressed in those articles (the double helix, messenger RNA, the genetic code, the structure of chromosomes, visual perception, the origin of life), the bibliographies of many scientists, which contain hundreds of citations from which no clear concept emerges, seem obscene and point to the problem of publishing—better sometimes to have perished. The pressures are great because, despite attempts to the contrary, granting agency study sections, review committees, and promotion committees look for productivity—and often measure this as the number of recent publications. The next grant, the next step up the academic ladder, is based on "productivity" since the last grant or step, not on past performance.

It is not unusual in biomedical sciences to rank one *Nature* article as equivalent to five articles in a type A journal and to ten articles in a type B journal and never mind the rest. This reflects not just the stamp of originality, but also the wide circulation and exposure of the findings to members of the scientific community who sit on review panels and promotion committees. As usual, the good gets better because it is perceived to be so.

II

When the explosion in molecular biology was beginning, the journal *Nature,* which has now been regularly published for more than a hundred years, spawned an offspring called *Nature New Biology.* This was devoted to research articles concerned with molecular and cellular biology, while the parent journal, renamed *Nature Physical Science,* continued to publish articles dealing with the rest of science: physics, chemistry, astronomy, cosmology, physiology, evolution. The editor for the *New Biology* was Benjamin Lewin, and it lasted about three years until he left in 1974 to found his own journal, *Cell,* which took this subject matter as its own. The fission of *Nature* into two parts became fusion as they coalesced back into a single journal, but the emphasis on molecular biology was established and continued to be a major emphasis along the path set by *New Biology.*

In the first issue of *Cell,* Lewin indicated the journal's goals—to publish articles of general interest in molecular and cellular biology, tumor virology, immunology, and genetic development—and he promised rapid review. The importance of the last item should not go

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underestimated. In such staid journals as the *Journal of Biology Chemistry* the time from submission of a manuscript to publication may be as long as a year and is rarely less than six months. Methods in biological science drive not only the questions that can be studied but also the pace at which answers can be obtained. The days when Charles Darwin had a grand theory and could only be pushed into publication during his lifetime by Wallace's deductions of the same principles belong to a different era. To publish slowly is often to publish second and, although few scientists' contributions are remembered for even a few years, in the immediate world there is only one first announcement and all else is, rightly or wrongly, considered confirmatory or "me too." It was not the slick format and high quality illustrations of *Cell* but the subject matter and short time from submission to publication that rapidly established it as a premier journal.

Lewin could offer this because he was a scientist himself and, having published a two-volume treatise on the subject, confident he knew the major questions and could identify significant progress toward answering them. The journal's office was in Cambridge, Massachusetts, near MIT Press and near many reviewers from the faculties of Harvard and MIT. A receiving office was also established in London. It was Lewin, the active editor, who made it all work. It worked because Lewin was centrally involved in the process, identifying articles that he judged dealt with significant questions and returning immediately those judged to be outside this sphere. Reviewers were expected to render acceptance decisions on manuscripts sent them using this same criterion, and any delay in reviewing resulted in a prodding phone call.

Descriptions of methods that detail the reagents used and exactly how the experiments were done, all the conditions and controls and methods of analysis, which in traditional journals follow the introduction before any results are presented, were placed in an abbreviated form at the end of the article in a different typeface. Readers were now expected to follow the results and the conceptual deductions that could be drawn and not agonize over methodological details and whether experiments were done correctly before looking at results and conclusions. *Nature* and *Science* use an even more abbreviated presentation of experimental procedures, placing them in the legends to figures that present data or relegating them in very small print to the reference list at the end. This style of presentation is reinforced in all three journals by strict page limits and clearly tilt toward the style of Watson and Crick rather than following the Feynman dictums.

Minimalization of methods was reinforced by the way molecular biology came to be practiced. Scientists no longer make most of the reagents they use; these are packaged and sold in kits. Arthur Kornberg, who has spent a lifetime studying the mechanisms by which DNA is replicated, recounts a conversation with a salesman who inquired what was being studied in his laboratory and, on hearing it was DNA replication, informed Kornberg they sold a kit that did that. And they do. The availability of kits to cut DNA, replicate it, transcribe it, and clone it enormously accelerates the pace of experimentation and its costs. One of the best-selling scientific books of recent times is a how-to manual of molecular biology procedures published by Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press. This cookbook grew out of the successful summer schools taught at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory where scientists from all over the world come to learn how to use this technology. If everyone is more or less following the same protocols from the same cookbooks and using the same ingredients from the same kits, an argument can be made against extensive descriptions of methodologies.

Methods are of interest only to the experimenter, usually a graduate student or postdoctoral fellow, who is of necessity obsessed with the thousand and one details, each of which must be done precisely, so that there is a completed and interpretable result. Just as the details of how the gourmet meal is made are of little interest to the diner, so how the experiment is done becomes of less interest to readers. Only those studying the same question really care, and they will frequently clone by phone, simply requesting reagents that may have taken a year to make from those reporting conclusions using them. Sharing of such reagents has become an accepted etiquette dictated as publication policy of *Cell*.

Rapid publication on subjects of general interest, as advertised by *Cell*, sets the example of the involved editor. Lewin epitomizes this, but Peter Newmark also assumed the

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same role for *Nature*. They are informed; they attend scientific meetings where investigators present unpublished information and conclusions are debated; and they discuss ideas with practicing scientists. Although rules of critical review by knowledgeable scientists are adhered to, authors now frequently telephone to describe their findings and inquire whether "the journal would be interested." With *Nature* and *Science*, they probe to find out the length permitted—a headliner or short report—and make submission decisions accordingly. Such a pre-screening facilitates scientific exchange by shortening time to publication, but it introduces a judgment of which questions are considered leading and what would represent a true advance toward answering them. That such judgments are frequently correct is probably true; it is equally true that such judgments determine which research is highlighted and framed in the leading journals. One could argue that the very success of these journals attests to the correctness of these judgments. Because such judgments affect choice of research areas and financing of research projects, we are, however, unlikely ever to know the alternate futures. It is still true that correct new ideas, no matter where published, will ultimately percolate down to wider audiences, but their originators may experience lean years waiting for this to happen.

III

Scientific publication creates some problems for grant review by agencies that pay for biological research, but it creates more major problems for promotion committees within universities. America remains an unusual place where, to be a scientific investigator, one must have a second job—most often a faculty position in a university. In research-oriented universities, faculty are selected and promoted on their scholarship, which for life sciences one ought to interpret as productivity and creativity. Although appointment and promotion criteria include teaching and community and university service, scholarship is the real and rigorous criterion. Because faculties are chosen for their intellectual diversity, it is unlikely that there will be experts in the same area of study in the same department and even less likely on university-wide ad hoc committees at high levels of review.

Getting a hand on an individual's creativity can be a slippery process. A bibliography may be long because the individual is highly productive or because he has a reagent or assay that makes him a valuable collaborator to others. The publication list may be long because of journal-imposed space constraints, so that all facets of the solution to a complex biological problem require multiple publications, or it may be long because the same idea is reiterated in many guises. Correct evaluation is further hampered by the interactive nature of modern science where many individuals contribute to a complex story. In some cases, the length of the author list promises to exceed the text, and sorting out who contributed what is an imposing task.

For universities that take this process seriously—and most do—the easiest solution is to ask for outside letters of evaluation. Because confidentiality is being challenged in the courts, damning with faint praise is the most critical letter likely to be received. Tenure within a university now that age limits are removed by law becomes a sinecure equaled only by appointment to the Supreme Court. Publication in *Nature*, *Science*, and *Cell* becomes most helpful to such review panels and letter writers because of the implication of wide interest and importance associated with publication in those journals.

In an effort to sort through the publication morass, some universities are asking each candidate to select three to five "most significant" publications and have outside reviewer letters contain comments on these. This has the virtue of actually requiring a critical reading of this body of published work. It might even have the virtue of exposing excellence in field X to criteria indicative of broader scientific standards in other fields. It will not sort out relative contributions to multi-authored papers, but it may focus attention on those that present new concepts, new discoveries, as contrasted with those that present more details about known ideas.

University faculties are quite diverse, as is scientific inquiry, and only with historical perspective will the truly important be known. In the meantime we all struggle with information overload, too many second-rate journals publishing mostly derivative studies, and continual sifting for the original nuggets of gold. There is, I believe, a general sense that there is too much publication and that

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some of that should perish. What should not perish is rigorous presentation of the kind Feynman described, work done with all the controls and the most definite methodologies available, so readers can accept the conclusions with confidence. Perhaps each significant discovery should be placed on the front page of *Nature*, *Science*, or *Cell* and a more detailed story should be told elsewhere as an essential supplement, so that the headline can be believed. No one wants less new information, just less old information represented—and no false information, please.

Prayer

KELLY CHERRY

May night, when it comes, be merely lack of light,
the stars unbright in a blue-black sky
that is the visual analogue of a sigh—

God's sigh, expressing love and sadness,

and the faintest note of amused exasperation
sounded at the edge of the universe
like a quasar, or the rhyme at the end of a verse.

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Montaigne

ROBERT M. ADAMS

Within the first few pages of the *Apologie de Raimond Sebond,* Montaigne makes an extraordinarily complex yet perfectly simple statement: "We are Christians by the same title that we are Périgordins or Germans" (p. 422).* The sentence, which first appeared in the second (1588) edition of the *Essais,* summarizes an argument of several preceding paragraphs to the effect that men as a rule have no convincing reasons to offer for their choice among religious beliefs. They are carried along by prepossessions picked up in childhood; they conform with the practices and prescriptions of the society in which they find themselves. If the accident of birth places them in a Christian community, they will be, more than likely, Christians—perhaps only ostensible Christians, but that rather than ostensible something-elses. Set in another community, they would most likely be ostensible or genuine believers in other values, whether Moslem, Congregationalist, Buddhist, or those of some other faith.

The sharp edge of the comparison lies in its first term. German is the tongue of a political entity with a literature of its own, a history of nuanced and sophisticated thought, a cosmopolitan vocabulary, a formulated grammar. Périgordin in Montaigne's world is no more a proper language than the city of Périgord is an autonomous political unit. The Périgordins speak a dialect of French, soft, shambling, prolix. Montaigne lists it (p. 622) among the other regional argots, such as Poitevin, Xaintongeois, Anjoumoisin, Lymosin, and Auvergnat—he might have added Basque and Catalan. Barring researchers into the French dialects, most of these local linguistic variations are known only to local people born into them; elsewhere they are a useless idiosyncrasy or a positive handicap. Does Montaigne mean to say that Christianity is just a regional spiritual dialect, an accident of birth no more significant than a Brooklyn accent or a Louisiana drawl?

As a bare observation of social fact, the power of example (custom or habit) is everywhere evident, and it makes itself felt in many matters other than religious belief. Had we been brought up among the cannibals of New Guinea (there seems no doubt) most of us would enjoy nothing better than a roasted human thigh bone or a well-larded forearm. All the activities bound together as the process of socialization (from toilet training to table manners to the proprieties of language and the rituals of hierarchy) proceed in good measure by a process of imitation. One is born into a group and copies what goes on within it. However narrow the group into which one is integrated, so long as one does not see beyond it, its practices are bound to appear natural, innate. There is a side of Montaigne that relishes for its own sake this spectacle of infinite human diversity, drawing from it the potent conviction that human opinion, however wise in its own conceit, is fluctuating and fallible in general, and absurd when seen from another point of view.

If the point is not very profound in itself, there is no lack of evidence to illustrate it. Essay I, 23 "De la coustume" pitchforks it onto the page, as if trying to bury the reader

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*Citations are to the "breviary" of Montaigne students, the Pléiade *Oeuvres complètes* edited by Thibaudet and Rat. Translations are my own, checked against those of Professor Donald Frame.

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under loads of comparative ethnology. No doubt about it, what is taboo here is sacred there, what is repugnant to one society is glorified by another, and what a society warmly endorses in one age it will bitterly repudiate in the next. Though the spectacle is amusing in itself, Montaigne has a serious motive in branding human opinion as weak and fluctuating; he wants to emphasize the infallible, unchanging, infinite, and eternal mind of God as the only secure anchor of human faith. But if, as the fateful sentence implies, Christian faith is itself just a matter of opinion—of convention and local conformity—what happens to the rock, the anchor, the buttress of intellectual security? Can Christianity be nothing but one among many feeble, parochial prejudices, for which nobody can provide any substantial rationale? This would be a startling letdown from the original premises of the *Apologie de Raimond Sebond*, which had promised a solid defense, not only of the Christian religion against ethnics and atheists, but of the Roman Catholic discipline against the rational individualism of the Protestant reformers.

Perhaps, indeed, Montaigne's sentence might be read with a slight sarcastic edge to it, as if to say "we accept Christianity for superficial and conventional reasons (that is, from mere conformity), but we neglect the truly cogent and intrinsic reasons for giving it our allegiance." Without getting into technicalities of biblical scholarship, this turn of argument opens a fairly persuasive rhetorical line. One can appeal to the sublime simplicities of the Old and New Testaments, to the record of miracles and martyrdoms, to the serried doctors and saints. Of course these are not the foundations of faith but the presumed consequences, and the consequences carry a lot less conviction for those who do not share the faith than for those who do. Still, it is a train of linked topics that apologists since Saint Augustine have not scorned. Montaigne, however, is not attracted to that argument, as he is not interested in any of the evidential details by which polemical theologians try to establish the authority of their different creeds and disciplines.

These are the considerations on which a reasoned commitment must be founded, and though Sebond was seriously interested in them, Montaigne, his defender, is not. For the infinite diversity of human customs is not, in Montaigne's view, simply a fact (fortunate or unfortunate); it is a divine dispensation, decreed by the highest wisdom to teach man the folly of human prudence. That folly is our destiny, not to be questioned or altered, only accepted. Wherever an individual has been dropped on the crazy quilt of differing and contradictory beliefs, it is his duty to conform with the rules prevailing there. This is nothing less than "the law of laws" (p. 117), "the highest reach of which the human mind is capable" (p. 562); it is the doctrine laid down and exemplified by Socrates, the wisest of men, not without some evidence of divine inspiration. The rule is clear; and it is simple: everyone should conform with the custom of his country. Individuals may have, and doubtless will have, private reservations, quirks of conscience; but in matters of external behavior, whether great or small, conformity is the indicated rule.

Two advantages flow from this arrangement. As anyone can plainly see, it makes for social peace, tranquility, and order. The teaching restrains, or tries to restrain, the meddling impulse of the presumptuous human mind to improve on societies that have grown gradually through a series of intricate, interrelated adjustments to a state of calm balance. One's rule of conduct and belief, according to the "law of laws," is tangible and present; it is the way things are. If we cannot see any reason for an existing institution, that is the best of reasons for treating it with special reverence. (In the rationalizing culture of the twentieth century, we make a joke of this: "There's no reason for some particular practice, it is just our policy"—with the implication that the practice is obviously stupid. But Montaigne would assume that if it has been the policy for a long time without any apparent reason, it must be the product of a higher reason.) To grasp after an ideal perfection is to put at risk an achieved and moderate balance. To try reconciling diversities that are already functioning as separate unities is to risk a similar disaster. Our safest guide is therefore the common practice of our native district. We should be Christians as we are Périgordins or Germans, by the accident of our birth. And clearly the principle is capable of indefinite extension; it cannot be kept from applying to Buddhists, Mohammedans, and (if any can be found) worshipers of the devil himself.

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Even in the practical affairs of everyday life, following the "law of laws" leads to manifold manifest absurdities. A virtuous act on one bank of a river or one side of a mountain may be judged a vicious act on the other side of the boundary. What is saving truth under one prince will be damnable error under his successor; and moving from one district to another might involve changing the basic beliefs of one's life. The evident absurdity of these conclusions throws us back on the need for a higher truth, uniform and unchanging; and this too, Montaigne says, was part of the divine plan: "Oh, Lord! how much do we not owe to the benignity of our sovereign creator for having disabused our faith of these wandering and arbitrary devotions and founded it on the eternal base of his sacred word!" (p. 563).

The piety of these two judgments is quite beyond question, and either could provide good reason to praise the wisdom of the Almighty. But they cannot possibly fit together. Either one makes the diversity of human mores a rule of ultimate truth, and accepts it unquestioningly as the "highest reach of human wisdom," "the law of laws," and so forth; or one emphasizes its patent, flagrant absurdities as an incentive for seeking something better. This higher wisdom might conceivably be a rarefied and exalted moral code, requiring of mankind some inventive thinking. In fact, Montaigne seems to locate it in the Bible—that is, the sacred word, or "saincte parolle." In any event, it is plain that we cannot simultaneously admire the rule of conformity as the ultimate in human wisdom and as a code so grossly absurd that we must look to heaven for something better.

As for the eternal base provided by the "saincte parolle" for the repose of our secure judgment, the most perfunctory glance reveals it to be rife with problems, uncertainties, and interpretive ambages. For the greater part of the world, it is not a holy word at all—they have different holy words, or deny that there are any. Even believers do not agree on what the text amounts to or the principles for deciding between text and apocrypha; the necessary translations are innumerable and often sharply different. Different texts on the same topic can be cited to contradictory effect; the relation between the Old and the New Testaments is a matter of standing dispute; there is no convincing way of deciding what is to be read allegorically, what literally. And the consequences of all these uncertainties are clear from history; the holy word has been the pretext, and often enough the actual cause, of bloody wars beyond number. This is the solid base on which we are to repose our assured judgment?

The loose texture of Montaigne's religious argument invites us to cast a look at the composition in which most of it appears, the *Apologie de Raimond Sebond.* Physically, it ranks as Essay 12 of Book II, or about the middle of the finished collection. On the assumption that Montaigne incorporated the essays into his manuscript in approximately the order they were written, scholarship has generally dated the *Apologie* about 1576, which leaves Montaigne's major statement of religious skepticism squarely between two substantial pieces of writing in which skepticism and the problems of religion generally play a much less marked role. The essayist's career thus falls into three distinct parts, with something like conversion experiences before and after the *Apologie.* Though there is no evidence for anything like even one conversion experience, that is not a disqualifying condition; almost all the evidence bearing on individual essays and their possible connection with Montaigne's biography is sparse and tenuous. But within the *Apologie* itself there are rough joints and abrupt transitions, suggesting different stages of composition. Thus it is not unthinkable that parts of that sprawling composition may predate the essays—may go back to a period not too remote from that in which the translation of Sebond's text itself was being performed.

If that were so (it is only a speculation, and one that goes against the judgment of many distinguished experts, but let's try it out), one might be, in a way, getting rid of that three-part division of Montaigne's intellectual career that has become such a quagmire for Montaigne's intellectual biographers. (The second part of this essay will deal with that argument.) It might change another emphasis too; instead of skepticism being a passing episode in Montaigne's life, a flirtation to which we must beware of assigning weight or depth, it would be seen as the ground bass of his temperament. Stoicism, then, as he picked it up from reading Cicero and Seneca, would be a momentary cloud that darkened the first period of his essay writing, when he felt moral

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teaching was a primary duty. But after that period had passed, his natural temper reasserted itself. As an old friend told Doctor Johnson, "I tried in my time to be a philosopher, but cheerfulness was always breaking in." As the least weighty and constricting of the philosophies, skepticism was for Montaigne the most cheerful.

The translation was complete, we know, by 1568, because Pierre Eyquem read it over with pleasure before he died in that year. If indeed Montaigne began to write the *Apologie* between eight and ten years after he finished the translation, it would be a unique instance of his interrupting the progress of the *Essais* to pick up a body of material with which he had long since finished, and which he did not find particularly sympathetic. And the interruption lasted far longer than it had to. The size of the *Apologie* does not consort easily with the other essays; it is three times longer than its nearest competitor, twenty times longer than the rough average of all the other essays. Had they been in existence when he wrote it, nothing would have been easier than to cut down or divide up its inordinate dimensions. But perhaps he wrote most of it before the discovery of Plutarch's *Moralia* (1572) put the idea of a collection of essays in his mind. Like everything Montaigne wrote, it was subject to later augmentation, and some part of it was adapted to a later occasion (as the Catholic wife of a Protestant monarch-to-be, Marguerite de Valois was thought to need spiritual reinforcement). Refurbishings of this and other sorts undoubtedly took place. But if Montaigne, finding himself short of materials for his second book, looked over his old manuscripts, nothing would have been more natural than to pick up the *Apologie*. And if it is put very early in his career, two abrupt, unmotivated changes in the substance of that career are eliminated, and some of the loose thinking in the composition of the study itself is partly explained.

Moving the *Apologie* forward, as this speculation proposes, raises the question of where and how Montaigne acquired his skepticism, since that is not normally an innate endowment. Partly, no doubt, it was the formidable intellectual system of Sebond himself that provoked Montaigne's refractory and independent spirit. But before that his experience with the law in the Bordeaux parliament, where he spent thirteen fretful and impatient years dealing with the machinery of the law, put some of the skeptical iron in his temper. Professor Donald Frame in his biography *Montaigne* is blunt: "It did not take Sextus Empiricus or Cornelius Agrippa to teach him his sceptical temper; it had ripened for thirteen long years in the halls of the Bordeaux parlement" (p. 62). Before that there were Montaigne's years at the Collège de Guyenne, where the best teachers in France, proceeding on an antiquated system, succeeded in eradicating from his mind most of the Latin he had acquired at home under his father's benevolent laissez-faire. And behind everything—not to be used to explain anything nor itself explicable—lay that quality of willful self-sufficiency that the essayist himself marked out in the essay on Presumption (II,17) as part of his fundamental character.

Some writers are essentially builders, others architects; Montaigne is of the first class in that he knows better where he wants to get than what materials he can use to get there. Very often the *Tendenz* of his argument—its underlying direction—dictates the thrust of individual passages. At one point he is explicit and quite sharp that a believer must take church doctrine as it is given to him, without reservations or exceptions. "It's not for us to determine the degree of obedience that we owe [to the church]" (pp. 180–81). That loose eclecticism had been Montaigne's fault in his youth; with more experience, he understands the importance of hewing close to the line. (What he rejects is still with us in the twentieth century under the mocking name of "cafeteria-Catholicism.") Yet the essayist repeatedly emphasizes his own restiveness under rules and restrictions. "I have a mind that belongs wholly to itself and is accustomed to go its own way. Never having had till this moment a ruler or governor imposed on me, I have gone just as far and just as fast as I wanted to. That has made me soft and useless for the service of others, good only to myself" (p. 626). Elsewhere he tells us that he would rest less easily if he knew there were some particular spot in India, however remote, where he could not go (p. 1049). It is with a particular relish that he describes the liberties of a French provincial gentleman—he specifies a man in Brittany, but clearly he is thinking of one in the Guyenne. Unless such a man chooses to seek out court employment, he need have no more to do with his own mon-

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arch than with the king of Persia (p. 257). Elsewhere, Montaigne, describing his own character, directly and categorically yet with obvious delight in the epigram, says (p. 633), "I avoid commandments, obligations, restraints." That is doubtless true, but it has to be set alongside his repeated emphases on conformity, custom, tradition.

This is not just a matter of freedom for me and compulsion for you, though it sometimes sounds that way. It is also a matter of high and low. Mysteries of the faith, being hard to define and explain, offer many crevices in which heresy and schism can sink their roots. But the established church—any established church, for that matter—is an admirable engine of social order and discipline. Montaigne therefore reduces the content of faith to something like the featureless and unquestionable "absolute," while he magnifies largely the power of the church to correct and to reward. The bribe of heaven is, he thinks, a very effective lure, especially as manipulated by "gens d'entendement" (p. 613) to control the passions of the simpleminded. Montaigne finds himself at one point applauding the Bedouin warriors described by Joinville who fling themselves wildly into battle as if already savoring the embraces of the heavenly houris. That is a "creance trèssalutaire," however illusory it may be; Montaigne is barely able to salvage the Christian position with a perfunctory verbal distinction between the truth of "our" spiritual bribes and the vanity of all others. It is a shaky position, but in line with Montaigne's other bit of wishful web-weaving, to the effect that the Christian religion has always taught total submission and obedience to secular rulers (p. 119; cf. also p. 467 and pp. 477–78).

But this is when he is on his conformity track and emphasizing the "low" functions of religion as a tool of suasion. The loftier track steers him away from all such tangible considerations, as well as from well-trodden paths of exhortation and argumentation. Those conventional *topoi* were familiar in the sixteenth century to the point of satiety; not a little of the pleasure for Montaigne's early readers must have been the spectacle of his dexterity in avoiding the issues racking Europe's intellectual community, along with the obligatory vocabulary for discussing them. It is a pleasure largely lost on us; but for the common reader of those days it must have been acute. About the reasons for this avoidance—most impressive when looked at across the spectrum of Montaigne's writings—there has been much speculation. The idea that he was a conscious hypocrite is surely excessive; among other motives, discretion, laziness, indifference, and the sheer exhilaration of literary adventure may well have entered in. For these and no doubt for many other reasons, Montaigne's theological positions are often felt to be collectively dodgy, though each of his opinions is perfectly defensible in itself. He combined a maximum of urgency in calling on us to conform, with a minimum of specificity about what tenets and practices we are to conform with. The savor of this particularly mixed dish is the salty suspicion that Montaigne did not take either of his contrasting religious formulas with complete solemnity.

What makes Montaigne's theological discourse look like a somewhat helter-skelter *summa* is that he bundled so much of it into a single piece, the *Apologie de Raimond Sebond*. His political and social views, on the other hand, are infused through the entire body of his writing, not only in unexpected locations but often, as it appears, to contradictory effect. However emphatically they seem to be formulated, they cannot always be taken straight. For example, the essay on sumptuary laws (I,43) culminates in a zestful peroration that has often been cited as evidence of Montaigne's categorical opposition to any form of social change:

> In all matters except those that are entirely evil, change is to be feared: change of seasons, of winds, of diet, of temper; and no laws are properly settled except those to which God has granted such long life that nobody knows their origin or that things were ever otherwise. (p. 261)

Though it deals with two different matters in two very different time frames, the sentence seems perfectly direct. But in context it is hardly so. Montaigne is writing at the end of a slight and rather perfunctory essay; he needs a punch line. He comes out in opposition to some variations over which neither he nor anyone else has any control (winds, seasons), and he speaks against change in matters of dress and diet where he knew and said the

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wise man adapts himself to the variations of common custom. When his tastes called for one sort of wine rather than another, he did not hesitate to shift from red to white and then back again. When he went traveling, he prided himself on living after the fashion of the country—change and variety were for him, as for any good traveler, of the essence. His restless mode of life, his divagatory style of writing, and very often his explicit statements discourage us from taking seriously what he sets forth as an abstract proposition.

Passages denouncing change in any form are easy to accumulate; they generally turn out to result from a particular irritation. "I am disgusted with novelty, whatever form it takes" (p. 118), he writes; it is the Reform that bothers him, and fear of the same maelstrom lies behind his outcry, "Nothing destroys a society like innovation; change in itself casts injustice and tyranny in concrete" (p. 935). Indeed, he goes so far as to say that no state of public affairs is so bad (provided it has age and continuity on its side) that it is not preferable to change and disturbance (p. 639). But of course the alternative that lay before him and all around him, threatening daily dissolution, was civil war and the random unpredictable killings that made life in the countryside a constant terror. Many conservative thinkers talk glibly about the social chaos that would follow one measure or another; Montaigne had looked real social chaos in the eye. That may have been one reason why he took such a dim view of change, which he equated, no doubt too easily, with disorder.

For of course he knew perfectly well that change, which he regularly referred to as "branle," is the universal law of nature and society. Everything changes, and we change imperceptibly within the current of events. What we call stability or fixity is simply a slower form of change. We accustom ourselves almost instinctively to anything that befalls us, however unpleasant it may seem to an outsider. The essay "Of Experience" (III,13) includes a lovely vignette to illustrate the argument. Montaigne had made a point of hiring beggar children to work in his kitchen, but found they often preferred a life of vagabondage. One whom he found picking over mussel shells in a garbage dump for his dinner could not be brought by pleas or threats to abandon his gutter existence. It makes a pretty picture—neat little Montaigne on the garbage midden arguing with the smelly beggar boy—and it leads him to a serious social point. "Such are the effects of custom. Not only can it mold us into what shape it chooses—but form us to change and variety itself, which is the most noble and useful of lessons" (p. 1061). Thus custom, which appears to set its face against change, opens a door to acceptance of change as a basic condition of life. That is on the level of abstraction; of course there is also a social attitude in the image of the philosopher trying and failing to convince the ragamuffin.

Of recent years we have heard a good deal about Montaigne's conservatism, and there are plenty of texts on which to found such a view. But, in their context, some of the texts are less doctrinaire than they seem; others are expressions of a standing ideology that he endorsed in the abstract, but never dreamed of putting into practice; and still others are the consequence of applying a modern perspective to a set of Renaissance attitudes. Montaigne's contemporaries and near contemporaries—men whose values were formed, say, before the time of Jean-Jacques Rousseau—had no idea that Montaigne was a conservative man. They shared his (mostly tacit) belief in a hieratic, authoritarian society bound together by personal loyalties, and they laid less emphasis than we do on the individual and his rights. They had no notion that science and society were marching hand in hand down a paved road marked Progress. In all these fundamental assumptions Montaigne was at one with the men of his age. As he did not think society was hurrying to get somewhere, he tended to think change should be limited to restoring the ravages of time; projects for an ideal community roused his skepticism because he thought they would always have to be built of common human clay. But in opposing the doctrinaires of his own day, I think he had better wit than to turn doctrinaire himself.

Professor Jean Starobinski's recent stimulating study of Montaigne (*Montaigne en mouvement*, Gallimard, 1982; translated as *Montaigne in Motion* by Arthur Goldhammer, University of Chicago, 1985) summarizes the essayist's political and social philosophy under the heading of "conserve and endure." It is a phrase taken from the essay "On Managing One's Will" (III,10), and specifically from the section of it describing Montaigne's ten-

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ure as mayor of Bordeaux. But Professor Starobinski extends it to cover the essayist's outlook in general, perhaps too largely. For the Bordeaux appointment resulted from an extremely insecure temporary agreement between four unpredictable and basically hostile figures—Henri III, the duc de Guise, the queen mother Catherine de Medici, and Henri de Navarre (not excluding his wife Marguerite de Valois). These were the conditions of Montaigne's charge; and the last thing expected of him was that he would rock the boat. He did not do so, and rather preened himself on the fact that doing nothing in particular was his natural gift. But he was not always such an accommodating beanbag of neutral, negative qualities. Starobinski says in summary:

> He openly recommends submission to "those who command," not because "the general way of the world" is harmonious but because sublunary affairs, earthly life, invariably involve an element of disorder. It is not given to us to do anything about it, whether by solitary rebellion or general upheaval.

After all, the future is not within the compass of our knowledge or our will. God decides, or fortune (p. 273); and intelligent human action is not to be expected, since "no-one in Montaigne's time proposed any motives for worldly action other than those rejected in the essay 'On Managing One's Will,' namely avarice and ambition" (p. 272).

These formulas result in an extremely rigid and (be it confessed) hardly sensible philosopher. Hardly any of us fails to recognize that the future (as close as ten minutes from now) is not within the compass of our knowledge; but that does not keep us from making plans, establishing goals, and considering the future of the stock market. If sublunary affairs are unsatisfactory, and it is not given to us to do anything about it, why do so many of us buy a new pair of shoes when the old ones start to pinch? Montaigne may have been a philosopher, but he was not devoid of common sense. To make him say, "Human life is not perfectible and there's nothing whatever we can do to improve it" is to pull him far out of his orbit. One of the things he was doing in his book was setting an example of provocative, good-humored questioning, of free, unpretentious conversability. That was the part he played, in religion as well as in politics. The joy he took in direct verbal give and take, as described especially in the essay on conversation (III,8), bespeaks a provocative, challenging mind; the very style in which most of the essays are cast, with a minimum of formalities and special terminology, with a strong flavor of man-to-man intimacy, implies engagement in the affairs of this world. The terrible wars of religion would never have caused him such pain had he thought them irremediable acts of God. He was, as he sometimes said explicitly, an earthy man; and this is a major reason why the interior dialectic that Starobinski proposes as a fundamental element of Montaigne's intellectual career often appears extraordinarily tenuous.

The derivation of Professor Starobinski's pattern of Montaigne's life is evidently that put forward by Pierre Villey a half century ago—but much elaborated, both verbally and conceptually. Villey divided Montaigne's career into three stages, the stoic, the skeptical, and a *tertium quid* that could be labeled very loosely the Epicurean. These were at bottom chronological stages, the strongly stoic period coming before the skeptical stage represented by the *Apologie* (1576), the third stage after. Nobody, including Villey himself, ever thought of these as watertight compartments or proposed that they constituted a consecutive logical sequence. Still, the pattern seemed to make sense; and as a provisional scaffolding it was widely accepted. Starobinski's pattern, though similar in some ways to Villey's, is less clear of outline. It is applied several times over in different contexts, its units are less closely articulated; it is not chronological, but it is not logical either. The similarities are most clear from a concise outline. Montaigne, it would seem, began by rejecting the impressions of the material world, as conveyed through the senses, as fallacious; in the second stage, his search for a more authentic (metaphysical?) knowledge was frustrated by the limitations of his merely human mind; thus, thrown back on the world of appearances again, he reconciled himself to it, not as a way of real truth but as an area of doubt suitable to his own limited and fallible perceptions. But when did this development take place? Was it a one-time thing, or did it happen over and over?

This structure of experience could apply to every stage of existence from earliest childhood on up. At first one accepts experience

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unquestioningly, then one questions it, finally one returns to a qualified and pragmatic acceptance. It is the story of a baby getting acquainted with a kitten. There is a difficulty here in that the dialectical development completes itself in a very short period of time, and presumably one must establish a great many more dialectical developments to make up a career or a biography. Starobinski proliferates dialectical structures freely. Montaigne, he says, began with an original (and, I add, mostly hypothetical) acceptance of social values such as glory, esteem, and approbation; he progressed through an ideal of self-sufficiency and introspective contemplation (that must have been after he retired to Montaigne in 1571), and then entered the third phase, which must include publication of the *Essais*, the Italian trip, service as mayor of Bordeaux, and the rest of his life. (This third stage, as it encompasses a great many different miscellaneous activities, seems particularly hard to define.) As Starobinski at one point summarizes:

> This is the pattern of Montaigne's movement through three stages of relationship—a pattern that will repeat itself in other kinds of relationship. The first stage is dependence. The second is characterized by the desire to regain possession of oneself and by the liberating separation. In a third phase a full legitimacy is restored to the bond woven of concrete obligations and duties, that unites us to our surroundings. The particular is rediscovered in its relation to the universal. (p.105)

But the real biography is hard to relate to this pattern. When Montaigne retired to his château in 1571, that was perhaps the "liberating separation," but when he married Françoise in 1565, that sounds like stage three, the restoring of full legitimacy to the bond woven of concrete obligations and duties.

The Italian voyage of 1580–81 demands, and receives, a dialectical structure of its own. Stage one is Montaigne restless at home, stage two is Montaigne on the road (liberating separation), and in stage three "he returns to discover in his home a new aspect, a fresh value, revealed to him by the distance he has traveled. He is more fully aware that he is dealing with the particular and can love it as such" (p. 102). It is a moving scene, this Enoch-Arden completion of the dialectical pattern, subject only to the limitation that there is absolutely nothing like it in Montaigne's text. The finale is one hundred percent Starobinski, revealing in the analyst a quite unexpected talent for Grade-B movies. And like most narratives, whether good or bad, it arranges Montaigne's life in a simple, sequential, temporal pattern.

In fact the three stages are not supposed to refer to a chronological sequence at all. They do not "necessarily" correspond to distinct phases of Montaigne's life. But the magnetism seems irresistible. For on the heels of his clarification, Starobinski plunges into a third tripartite analysis, chronological all the way, this time of Montaigne's dealings with money. It appears that Montaigne was dependent as long as his father lived, independent but stingy when he came into his own estate, and in the last phase of his life relaxed and content to keep income and expenses more or less evenly balanced. Like rabbit from hat, there is another bit of dialectic for you.

The meander into Montaigne's finances is only an excursion by way of an analogy, but it suggests the infinite adaptability of the tripartite—that is, dialectic—division to any circumstance, however common. Montaigne passed his boyhood on the family estate, he went to the Collège de Guyenne, he returned to Montaigne after marrying, "restored to the bond woven of concrete obligations and duties." He grew up near Bordeaux, he took service as mayor of Bordeaux, he returned after the liberating separation to his natal spot. Almost every occasion of human life fits, or can easily be squeezed to fit, the dialectic pattern. One embarks on a project (thesis), one encounters resistance (antithesis), one emerges with a sense of tempered satisfaction called compromise or synthesis. Going to a school, taking a trip, getting married, reading or writing a book, all bundle into the dialectic pattern as if it had been shaped to their measure. And most of all is this true of self-descriptive writing. The experience itself is stage one (thesis); a period of separation or distancing is stage two (antithesis); and the retrospective rearrangement in which the experience takes shape as a formal piece of writing can only be stage three (synthesis). The pattern is simplicity itself. It is also foolproof. It works every single time. The dialectical spin that can be put on anything from painting a canoe to writing the *Confessions* of Saint Augustine tells us nothing about the process or the way to understand it.

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And what specifically are those logical relations that bind together unreasoned dependence, autarchical refusal, and disciplined relationship—that are not chronological but are drawn irresistibly to definition under that aspect? They are extraordinarily elusive; Starobinski seems unwilling either to define or to exemplify them. Their magnetic affinity for chronological categories is not in the least surprising, since the Hegelian dialectic is inherently bound up with historical change, of which it supplies the motive power. In any event, synthesis necessarily implies a preexisting thesis and antithesis; the ingredients of the dialectic occupy a fixed chronological relationship. But "logical relations" in the abstract (without any particular connectives being specified) serve only to confuse the proposed pattern (if indeed without specific relations it can be a pattern at all), and distance it from the particulars it is supposed to explain. And the dialectic as an infinitely reduplicatable pattern melds imperceptibly into the dusty routine of every day.

Like most men, but more explicitly than most, Montaigne often responded to several motives at once; the pattern of the dialectic imposes its own preferred causations. Quite apart from abstract design and specific motivation, accident entered into the shaping of Montaigne's life, as it does perforce into everyone's; and an accident in Montaigne's life was sometimes part of the design (in both senses of the word) in other people's. His election as mayor of Bordeaux was strictly involuntary, but it suited the designs of some very important people. He adapted—as how could he not?—to the wholly unforeseeable death of his dearest friend La Boétie, and to the crucial, unexpected death of the duke of Anjou in 1584, which made Henri of Navarre heir presumptive to the throne. Through such and similar accidents Montaigne's life progressed, not logically, not dialectically, not under impulsion of any controlling motive, but, as they say, by guess and by God. And so with his writing, which he proudly said was a perfect counterpart of his life. Accident played a major part in both.

Many if not most of the essays were strictly occasional. Montaigne picked up topics and examples as they presented themselves, adding material in his margins when it seemed opportune, but (as he pointedly said) *not* revising for consistency. He never tried to produce a seamless web, and could not have done so had he tried. The idea that this pretense of writing spontaneously was just a façade to hide a complex structural principle of which he never revealed an inkling seems farfetched and uncharacteristic. From time to time he defined his objective in writing, always a little differently: to present a complete picture of himself for friends to remember him by, to enjoy the pleasure of conversing with congenial minds or even to attract their acquaintance, to order and discipline his personal imaginings, to explore in himself a microcosm of humanity (when you've seen one, you've seen them all), to sound the depths of his own mind. The essays were written, with substantial intermissions, over a period of more than twenty years; they repeat themselves, they overlap one another, they contradict sometimes one another, sometimes themselves. This is in perfect accord with Montaigne's declared view that experience is not a smooth, uniform, or consistent tapestry.

One structural principle he may have used, and even consciously: it is the Pyrrhonist device of stating one side of an issue and then the other, leaving the reader free to choose between them or not to choose at all if he prefers. Supposing this is a structural device in the first place, it is not much different from a non-structural or anti-structural device. That may be the best element of Starobinski's tripartite all-purpose division without defined relationships.

Semi-articulated relations, tangential associative speculations, and digressions *ex contrario* are a frequent feature of Montaigne's later essays; they are by no means careless, though they probably derive from a basic reluctance to reconcile or systematize his own writings. He never says in the course of one essay, "I remember I said something different in a previous essay, and this is the way to reconcile or integrate the two views." The same principle of composition—make it up as you go along, but do not look back—is evident in specific essays. The essay "On Moderation" (I,30), for example, begins by warning us against overindulgence in even respectable and virtuous activities. It is a perfectly straightforward, if oppressive, argument, until Montaigne suddenly turns on it to denounce the whole propaganda of abstention and rejection. As if, he says, pleasures were not rare and exceptional enough in this life, but

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we have to hedge around even legitimate desires with restrictions and inhibitions. True enough, but when the prudential rules go out the window, where does moderation enter in? After his outburst, Montaigne veers off into a discussion of penance and punishment, first in Europe and then in the New World, where it isn't exactly penance and punishment anymore. By giving several examples of atrocious cruelty in sacrificing prisoners of war, he incites our revulsion at the most bestial alternatives to moderation. That allows him to conclude with a story from Gomara about a tribe of Indians defeated by Cortez, who sent him five slaves with a message: "If you are a proud god who feeds on flesh and blood, eat these slaves and we will bring you more; if you are a gentler god, they bring you incense and bird-plumes; if you are a man, accept the birds and fruits they will present to you."

The indirect argument here is that Montaigne's readers will all know themselves to be men, not gods of any sort; thus merciful treatment of helpless innocents is recommended. With this conclusion it's hard to disagree. But where does it leave us with regard to the moderation that was the first and ostensibly the main theme of the essay? How will we know when the pursuit of moderation itself becomes immoderate? This is one of the essays that would self-destruct if its end were tied back into its beginning. Instead, it breaks off in midair with a neat story. Its method is neither sequential nor dialectic; it is what Montaigne, in another of his audacities, calls *poetic*.

Explicit description of that compositional principle occurs in "On Vanity" (III,9). The essay itself is a bravura assemblage of what the author calls "farcisseurs" (stuffers)—reflections on travel, on the most convenient place to die, on being obliged to other people, on the value of learning, on vices as a social cement just as effective as virtues. Toward the end, Montaigne in the course of describing his discontinuous, patchwork prose, cites Plato (in the "Ion") describing poetry as an art that is light, floating, and inspired—exactly the virtues Montaigne claims for his own prose. Just as plenty of verse plods painfully on the ground, so some prose can lift off and ascend. Plutarch loses the train of his thought again and again, yet his digressions are the finest parts of his essays, and Montaigne is his student.

> It is the careless reader who loses my subject, not I. Some word completing it will always be found in a nearby corner which will be fully sufficient, even though it takes up little space. I seek out change indiscriminately and tumultuously. My style and my thought go adventuring together. A man must have a touch of madness if he doesn't want to have an overplus of stupidity—so we are told by our masters in their precepts and even more in their examples. (p. 973)

So too with the ancient bards; they were inspired vessels through whom the Gods spoke, pouring forth whatever message descended on them, without forethought or arrangement. Being priests, philosophers, and poets all in one, they spoke instinctively "l'originel langage des Dieux" (p. 974).

His discovery of this divine language, of special thoughts if not of special words, Montaigne attributes to his withdrawal from the ways of the world and the paths of prudence. Instead of rubbing shoulders with the rest of the herd, he has chosen to go his own gait, follow his own instincts, and add when the spirit moves him some "embleme supernuméraire." But he specifically warns us not to suppose that his additions are evidence of increasing wisdom:

> My first publication was in the year 1580. In the stretch of years since then I have grown older, indeed, but wiser—not by a thumb's breadth. Myself at the moment and myself a while ago are certainly two; but which is better, I just don't know. Getting old would be a fine thing if we simply improved steadily. But it's more like the motion of a drunkard, tottering, dizzy, out of control, or like the motion of jackstraws tossed around by gusts of wind. (pp. 941–42)

"Jackstraws" *(jonchets)* is a very strong word here; it implies volatility, impersonality, undirectedness, and, above all, perfect freedom. That freedom was hard earned; he wanted to be free of consecutivity, incrementality, and responsibility to his own past writings. It's hard to think that a man who worked so hard to free himself from conditions that most of us take for granted would turn around and impose new constraints on himself.

Yet toward the end of his life there is a commitment on Montaigne's part that looks like just that. He accepted service under the man from Béarn whom he did not live to see crowned king of France as Henri IV.

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There were several unlikely things about this commitment. Navarre was a Protestant and had been a military mainstay of the Huguenot cause that Montaigne disliked and mistrusted. After his mayoral service of 1582–84 and his narrow escape from the plague, Montaigne was a sick and aging man. His old enemy the kidney stone was more ferocious than ever. He had less than a decade to live, and he had the last two editions of the *Essais* (1588 and 1595) to prepare. Everything invited him to repose at his country estate and to shun the strenuous, dangerous business of national politics. Yet he assumed political and diplomatic responsibilities that dragged him across miles of tedious and painful roads to grapple with kidnappers, robbers, and jailers. The details of Montaigne's service to Navarre are largely unknown because secrecy was of the essence; but his position as mediator between two fiercely opposed factions invited the mistrust of both. Thus, having worked his way free of the world of business and intrigue, he plunged headlong back into it, when his health and age gave him every reason to stand aloof, in order to serve a man of different faith who was twenty years his junior.

Putting the matter so antithetically makes it seem perhaps too acute. Montaigne's younger brother, the Sieur de Mattecoulon, was a more ardent Catholic than the essayist, or so it would seem; but for a long time he found no inconvenience in serving at Navarre's court. Montaigne himself recognized no deep religious conviction in either Navarre or the duc de Guise who headed the Catholic cause. They were leaders of political factions who made use of religious slogans. That estimate was at least partly confirmed when Navarre for openly political reasons converted to Catholicism after Montaigne's death. So, in supporting Navarre, Montaigne was not supporting an unknown quantity, far less a determined enemy of the Church.

In addition, Navarre was a neighbor. It is hard to know how much provincial solidarity counted for in that section of France at that time, but it cannot have been for nothing. Navarre shared with the rest of Aquitania a record of opposing Spanish and English efforts at domination; in the region they spoke a special dialect of which Montaigne was very conscious, and they had only recently been incorporated in France proper. Local pride could have helped move him to support the local candidate for royal dominion; and it would be augmented by a strong vestige of military-feudal loyalty to one's sovereign lord such as can be seen here and there in Montaigne. He rejoiced in his independence of the royal master; but his word once given was inviolable.

Besides, Navarre was fortunate in his choice of a predecessor. By contrast with Henri III, whose homosexuality was unconcealed, Navarre was not only an audacious warrior but an enthusiastic and successful pursuer of women. Both traits surely appealed to Montaigne, who we know would have liked to do more than he could along both lines. Navarre's virtues of daring and determination were exactly complementary to Montaigne's virtues of caution and speculative foresight. The older man was born to advise the younger one.

The chivalric streak that made Montaigne, as it were, a philosophic knight-errant, came out in a deep, quiet loyalty to Henri of Navarre, which could not fail to be, as well, loyalty to an ideal of France. Montaigne's position was utterly traditional; by the law of succession, Navarre was, after the death of Henri III, the legitimate king of France. But, as it happened, the success of Montaigne's candidate led, after the essayist's death, to the most dynamic and innovative of France's reigns. For this apotheosis Montaigne himself should not get all that much credit; what he contributed was simple common sense, moderation, and toleration as lenitives for assuaging the religious savagery he had always deplored. Still, it is completely *right* that after his death and outside his intent history managed to accommodate his conservative forms with a progressive content. Even if he could not, we can appreciate the poetic justice of that outcome.

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A Lost Classic

JONATHAN MARWIL

Sometimes it seems as if the wars of this century have been fought for the sake of literature. No one has counted the novels, memoirs, or poems that World War I spawned, but such a count would rise to the tens of thousands, very likely the hundreds of thousands. Similar figures would emerge for World War II, while even Vietnam, a very small war by comparison, has already engendered a very large bibliography. And if one added the scholarship devoted to these wars—histories, monographs, source materials—one would have sizable libraries. Which only confirms Homer's presumption that the fascination with war increases in the remembrance of it. "The Gods," he has King Alkinoös tell Odysseus, "spun the destruction of peoples, for the sake of the singing of men hereafter."

But most war literature rapidly fades from consciousness. Aesthetics plays a substantial role in this process: the bulk of the testimony has narrow concerns, little art, and much repetition. Economics also has a part: publishers' lists can only afford classics, except when a particular war is in fashion. Today's fashion, at least in America, is Vietnam, a war close enough to arouse feelings, yet distant enough to confront. If no masterpiece has yet emerged, many heartfelt and artful books have, and such efforts as Michael Herr's *Dispatches* and Philip Caputo's *Rumor of War* seem to be gaining canonical status. The term *canonical* indicates a third factor often influencing the fame of war books: the prevailing dogma about the war in question. Certain wars generate interpretive orthodoxies. Vietnam is one, World War I, or the Great War, another. In the case of Vietnam, the belief that the war was unwinnable and immoral was in place long before hostilities ended, and despite a recent scholarship that imagines the war could have been won, novelists and memoirists have ignored the conflict's moral or heroic potential and concentrated instead on its tragic and absurd qualities. Philip Caputo could only have told his story of disgrace—and had it read admiringly—about a war already accepted as immoral by his audience.

The canonical writers of the Great War are well known: Remarque, Graves, Blunden, Barbusse, Sassoon, Hemingway, and such poets as Owen and Rosenberg. They and others excoriated the war as squalid, degrading, pointless, and obscene; it was a war great only in scale, horror, and disillusionment. Theirs is a literature of victimization, spiritual as well as physical, and no less riveting today than it was two generations ago. *All Quiet on the Western Front* remains a best-seller; *Goodbye to All That* is praised wherever English literature is valued; *A Farewell to Arms* is for many Hemingway's soundest novel; and Wilfred Owen has become the patron saint of "war poets"—a term inspired by that war. Almost unknown to the general public is the most profound portrait of the war experience: *Her Privates We* or, in its unexpurgated form, *The Middle Parts of Fortune*. Its author is Frederic Manning, or as he identified himself in both editions in 1930, Private 19022—his rank and serial number when he served on the Somme in 1916.

Scholars of the war and its literature admire Manning's book. So did at least some of those authors whose works make up the canon. Hemingway, for example, called it "the finest and noblest book of men in war that I have ever read," and claimed to reread it every year "to understand how things really were so that

✪ JONATHAN MARWIL is the author of *Frederic Manning: An Unfinished Life* and *The Trials of Counsel: Francis Bacon in 1621*.

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I will never lie to myself nor to anyone about them." But to the general reading public today, the name Manning elicits nothing. Not until 1977 was the unexpurgated version published commercially, and both versions have slipped in and out of print in America for several years. Moreover, Paul Fussell, in his widely acclaimed *Great War and Modern Memory,* only alluded to the book. Not even that courtesy has been extended by the several recent companions and encyclopedias of English literature, for whom neither Manning nor his book ever existed. Neglected authors are, of course, as plentiful as pigeons, and their hectoring champions scarcely less so. But the oversight of Manning involves more than a lapse in judgment. It is a measure of the way in which we choose to remember the Great War.

But not entirely. Manning's obscurity is in part a consequence of his secluded life and career. Born and raised in Sydney, Australia, he settled in England in 1904 with the aim of becoming a writer. Until the mid-1920s, Manning lived at Edenham, a tiny village in Lincolnshire, a hundred miles north of London, and far from friends and other writers. After that he was a wanderer, traveling on the Continent—often with his widowed mother and spinster sisters, visiting Australia for a lengthy period in the early thirties and returning periodically to Edenham and the neighboring market town of Bourne, where he died in 1935 at the age of fifty-two. Shy, fastidious, frequently ill, given to sporadic drinking bouts, he avoided society and never married. His literary output, even for a man of fragile health, was small: three books of poetry (1907, 1910, 1917), a collection of philosophical tales *(Scenes and Portraits,* 1909), an authorized biography of a nineteenth-century British naval architect (1923), *Her Privates We* (1930), and miscellaneous literary criticism, principally (and anonymously) in the *Spectator* between 1909 and 1914. The historical novel on which he worked for more than twenty years was never finished; a novel of village life, contemplated in the early thirties, was perhaps never begun. T. S. Eliot's eulogy of Manning's work had much truth in it: "a style of writing, and a frame of mind, suited to a more cultured and better educated age than our own."

Twice in his life, however, Manning's pen thrust him into the limelight: first with *Scenes and Portraits,* a book that had some critics comparing him to Pater and Arnold, and twenty years later the war novel, which gathered rave notices and went through several printings. But fame was disquieting. "Private 19022," observed the *Daily Mirror* in March of 1930, "has fled to Italy rather than face the praise of his friends." Despite the respect of Eliot, who continually sought contributions from Manning for the *Criterion*; the regard of Ezra Pound, an early friend and, with Eliot, a persistent admirer of Manning's prose; the homage paid by such figures as E. M. Forster and Arnold Bennett; and the unquenchable enthusiasm of T. E. Lawrence—who claimed to have read *Scenes and Portraits* fifty times—Manning lacked a public identity in his own lifetime.

While his life has contributed to his invisibility, so has the restraint and subtlety of *Her Privates We.* Most of the literature of war is simply written and easily absorbed by the large audience for which it is intended. As a literature of experience, it seeks to be transparent in meaning. Plots—where they exist—and themes are self-evident, language straightforward, observations and reflections undemanding. Homer, as Matthew Arnold observed, was "eminently plain and direct" in both his "thought and the expression of it." So have the legions of his followers. Manning is a notable exception.

The structure of his novel is simple enough. It follows the fortunes of the "Westshires," a county regiment, on the Somme and Ancre fronts in 1916. There is no plot to speak of, only a focus on Bourne, a thirty-ish private of gentlemanly tastes who gradually realizes that he must consent to becoming an officer. The story opens with the aftermath of an attack and closes with the death of Bourne on a raid shortly before he is to return to England to begin officer training. In between we come to know a variety of Bourne's comrades and superiors, notably his two "chums," Shem, a Jew and a remarkable scrounger, and Martlow, a foulmouthed lad of sixteen. Except for Martlow, the lives of these men before the war, like their Christian names, are not revealed. All that matters, to us and to themselves, is what they are, and do, now. And what particularly mattered to Manning in telling their story was calculating the less obvi-

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ous conditions and necessary uncertainties of their predicaments.

> The problem which confronted them all equally, though some were unable or unwilling to define it, did not concern death so much as the affirmation of their own will in the face of death; and once the nature of the problem was clearly stated, they realized that its solution was continuous, and could never be final. Death set a limit to the continuance of one factor in the problem, and peace to that of another; but neither of them really affected the nature of the problem itself.

Thus does the narrator state the situation posed by the war; but Bourne is also allowed his philosophic musings, and they carry equal authority since he is really Manning, slightly disguised, and the progress of the Westshires copies exactly the movements of the Shropshire battalion in which he served. Without the running commentary, the novel would still have the authenticity for which critics praise it; with it, the reader is made to dwell on larger issues than conditions on the western front, larger even than war itself.

But however contributory the life and the text are, the primary explanation for the book's obscurity lies in our perception of the Great War itself. For decades it has enjoyed mythic status as a war prompted and managed by short-sighted politicians and even more witless generals, as a stalemate in which heroism had little meaning and glory lost whatever it had, and as a slaughter of such unanticipated proportions that tombs for the unknown, as Auden once wrote, seemed more appropriate than monuments to the mighty. More than eight million men had their lives squandered, and millions more came back mutilated in body and mind. All—the living and the dead—were victims of a horrific, pointless passage out of innocence.

It is a grand myth: simple, coherent, believable, instructive, and not without truth. First articulated during the war, it became dogma in the late twenties when a tidal wave of anti-war books—set in motion by post-war fissures—washed up on an anxious world looking to blame the past. What was remembered about the war was evoked by writers often embittered by the dilemmas and disappointments of the peace that had followed. Remarque's Paul Bäumer lives by an anachronism: he speaks of himself and his comrades as knowing they will not be able to find their way after the war, as being members of a "lost" generation. World War II, despite its slaughter, gave the myth even greater status; its seemingly self-evident purpose and justice, highlighted by the Holocaust, made its predecessor seem even more pointless, even more monstrous. What has provided staying power to the myth, however, is its ready recallability through literature, and the deep appeal of its central tenet, victimization. No century has been more sympathetic to the victim, whether of war, politics, or prejudice, no doubt because no century has created so many. And the sense of looming catastrophe—nuclear, ecological, demographic—creates in all of us a sense of victimhood. Where once the sense of existential threat was bounded by divine providence, and thus escapable (here or later), it now metastasizes in our imagination with scarce hope of deliverance.

Manning is no spokesman for this myth. His privates have too much grit and self-respect to think of themselves as victims. They complain when mistreated, but they accept their lot as soldiers, seeking always to make the best of their situation. Behind the lines they scrounge, get drunk, go slack, evade duties, and discuss the whys and wherefores of the war. Their speech is profane—Manning insisted on this—their thoughts governed by the here and now. Self-pity is reproved or ridiculed—it gets a man nowhere—and sharing of food, drink, and gossip obligatory. While comradeship is the means of enduring military life, it hardly matters once battle is joined. Then each man is profoundly alone, needing to summon the will to do what must be done, "helping the others perhaps, but looking at them with strange eyes, while the world became unreal and empty, and they moved in a mystery, where no help was." In that space the conscience of each man deliberates, and by choosing to go forward, asserts "the freedom of its being." The process was repeated each time the enemy was faced, and the determination "not to break" drove forward all but the weakest. Keenly sensitive to this process, Manning would not reduce his characters to the status of victims. To have done so would have cheated them of the "moral effort" that made their war, for all its horrors, "magnificent." Nor are they depicted as survivors; they had too little egotism and too

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much pride for that. Resting after battle, one of the anonymous rankers exclaims, "They can say what they bloody well like, . . . but we're a fuckin' fine mob."

That taunting pride is cleansing, demythologizing. It should suggest that the standard indictment of the war is true in the way parody is true: as selective, reductive, and forgetful. And it suggests that the war as experienced by those who came out of the mines and factories and off the farms was something different from the war reported by the middle-class literary gentleman whose books have largely formed the canon. No more than Manning himself were the anonymous ranks jingo patriots or war lovers, and least of all defenders of the war as a "mechanical operation." They abhorred the plagues of lice and mud, they bridled at stupid orders and unrealistic tactics, they despised harassing sergeants and pompous generals, and awake or asleep they battled fear. But they accepted the proposition that the Germans had to be beaten, and so confronted the challenge as one might an earthquake or a flood, as lamentable but not avoidable. Tragic? Yes, but as Manning would explain it, it was in the Greek sense, with its insistence on struggle and its openness to enlightenment, even heroism, and not in the modern sentimental sense, which is satisfied with tears.

The soldiers' pride was well earned, and Manning deeply respected it. He also respected their privacy, that unapproachable space that each man lived within. However much they shared, however familiar they became with each other, each man had thoughts not to be spoken, secrets to be preserved, a core mystery. Manning's pre-war writings had already sounded this theme, one we might expect from his own habits of solitude and reticence. In *Her Privates We*, the theme is fully developed. The soldiers' "brooding enigmatic faces, hopeless, but undefeated," that greet Bourne and the reader in the beginning are still there at the end, listening, "as Fritz began to send a lot of stuff over in retaliation for the raid. They sat there silently; each man keeping his own secret." In so doing, Manning thought, a man established his integrity; however used or abused by others, however driven by his appetites or his fears, he could not be diminished beyond that "bit of mystery" that made him human. Obviously there were moments when the men behaved like "automatons," or "animals," but they were only moments. Otherwise, they behaved like men, much put upon to be sure, but robustly human and enduring.

In giving them back their humanity, Manning wrote what E. M. Forster called a "love story." So did Homer in the *Iliad*. The war books that matter are almost always more about love than death, more about discovery than misery, more about men than battle. Lying at night between his two chums, Bourne "wondered what was the spiritual thing in them which lived and seemed ever to grow stronger, in the midst of beastliness." The love that flourished among men, that intense experiential closeness that has no past and often no future—even among survivors—goes by the name comradeship. Most books of the Great War testify to its importance, but Manning's evocations take one's breath away.

> Then he heard Pritchard talking to little Martlow on the other side of the tent.
>
> ". . . both 'is legs 'ad bin blown off, pore bugger; an' 'e were dyin' so quick you could see it. But 'e tried to stand up on 'is feet. ' 'elp me up,' 'e sez, ' 'elp me up.'—'You lie still, chum,' I sez to 'im, 'you'll be all right presently.' An' 'e jes gives me one look, like 'e were puzzled, an' 'e died."
>
> Bourne felt all his muscles tighten. Tears were running down Pritchard's inflexible face, like raindrops down a window-pane; but there was not a quaver in his voice, only that high unnatural note which a boy's has when it is breaking; and then for the first time Bourne noticed that Swale, Pritchard's bed-chum, was not there; he had not missed him before. He could only stare at Pritchard, while his own sight blurred in sympathy.
>
> "Well, anyway," said Martlow, desperately comforting; " 'e couldn't 'ave felt much, could 'e, if 'e said that?"
>
> "I don't know what 'e felt," said Pritchard, with slowly filling bitterness, "I know what I felt."

And so do we, without being told. Much later, when Martlow is shot, we will be taken through the stages of grief.

> Bourne flung himself down beside him, and, putting his arms round his body, lifted him, calling him.
>
> "Kid! You're all right, kid?" he cried eagerly.
>
> He was all right. As Bourne lifted the limp body, the boy's hat came off, showing half the back of his skull shattered where the bullet had come through

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it; and a little blood welled out on to Bourne's sleeve and the knee of his trousers. He was all right; and Bourne let him settle to earth again, lifting himself up almost indifferently, unable to realize what had happened, filled with a kind of tenderness that ached in him, and yet extraordinarily still, extraordinarily cold. He had to hurry, or he would be alone in the fog. Again he heard some rifle-fire, some bombing, and, stooping, he ran towards the sound, and was by Minton's side again, when three men ran towards them, holding their hands up and screaming; and he lifted his rifle to his shoulder and fired; and the ache in him became a consuming hate that filled him with exultant cruelty, and he fired again, and again. The last man was closest to him, but as drunk and staggering with terror. He had scarcely fallen, when Bourne came up to him and saw that his head was shattered, as he turned it over with his boot. Minton looked at him with a curious anxiety, saw Bourne's teeth clenched and bared, the lips snarling back from them in exultation.

"Come on. Get into it," Minton cried in his anxiety.

And Bourne struggled forward again, panting, and muttering in a suffocated voice.

"Kill the buggers! Kill the bloody fucking swine! Kill them!"

Reading this we may recall Achilles and Patroclus, and probably so did Manning when he wrote it. But he did not need to. He had only to remember the Somme and, as Hemingway said, write it as it "really" was.

And because he did, the book is a love story in another sense: it is a tribute to those anonymous ranks that Manning thought "the majority of war books," with their pity and revulsion, had "libelled." To make amends he does not pronounce on the soldiers' worthiness, mask their mistakes and weaknesses, or sentimentalize their natures. Their defects of act and character are plain to see, and so are their misunderstandings: of the war, of their officers, and of each other. What Manning tried to demonstrate instead, and what he thought deserved admiration, was the way their willingness to go on and their compassion for each other "lifted them above all defects, even of their own nature." As a result, Manning's privates look more like heroes than victims, even when they are most miserable, most pitiable. By signing the book "Private 19022," their admirer not only testified to being one of them but paid sincere tribute to what they had been and done.

Manning commemorated as well the anonymous ranks of every war. For while the novel's time, place, and incident are designedly specific, its perspective reaches beyond the immediate because its author understood that the essential dilemmas and anxieties of war are not particular. As Manning's chapter-heading epigraphs from Shakespeare suggest, 1916 might be 1815 or 1415. Whether a man was looking out from a trench or from behind a wall of shields he might well ponder that death comes only once, and "he that dies this year is quit for the next." Some of the Westshires say as much, not because they have read *Henry IV* but because they understood their predicament. That predicament was not formed by the special tactical or technological horrors of 1916, and it was no more pressing in the Great War than in any other. It was simply the inherent predicament of war itself, which "was only the ultimate problem of all human life stated barely, and pressing for an immediate solution." It ultimately derived from realizing, as Manning observed in his prefatory note, that "war is waged by men; not by beasts, or by gods. It is a peculiarly human activity."

The insistence on seeing the war whole, as a problem of the human condition, elevates *Her Privates We* above the category of "war novel." Or at least it should. For however similar the book is to other war books, it is always something more, for Manning was a more acute, more just, and more reflective observer, as well as a more ambitious creator. He was thirty-four in 1916, classically educated, and, by virtue of long dwelling in rural Lincolnshire, had lived closer to ordinary people than most of the commonly read war writers. All of this helps to explain the unusual empathy and perspective of what has been called his "profoundly democratic book." Those words, written for the preface to the 1943 edition by Manning's friend and publisher, Peter Davies, himself a veteran of the war, underlined Manning's intention to honor, by remembering exactly, those who do "most of civilization's dirty work." Difficult as the task was, Manning achieved it, knowing all the time that what he remembered was not what his contemporaries in 1930 were determined to remember. Nor what we choose to today. Such historians as Correlli Barnett, John Terraine, and, recently, J. M. Bourne have challenged the myth of the war, but their

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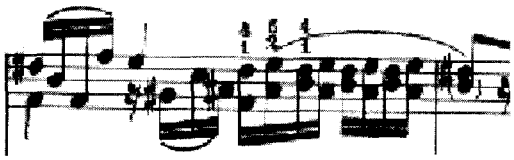

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questions lack the dramatic appeal of the canon.

They also lack the force to counter the conventional reading of this century. For not only is the myth strongly rooted—and still tended by survivors—but to pull it up would disturb much of the history around it. Were we to de-vilify and devictimize the war, how then would we assess its causes or its consequences, let alone its strategies? Would our view of pre-war Europe and the 1920s, for example, not require reshaping? Idle questions? Hardly, especially now that the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe has left historians scrambling to re-interpret the last seventy-five years. World War I will not escape the process, nor will the canon that informs our view of it. Will Manning then be more widely read, either in the process or later? He should be, and it would be nice to imagine that he will be. But he sensed himself that how he saw the war—"To call it a crime against mankind is to miss at least half of its significance; it is also the punishment of a crime"—would never be popular.

Johnny One-Note

DOING WHAT COMES NATURALLY: CHANGE, RHETORIC, AND THE PRACTICE OF THEORY IN LITERARY AND LEGAL STUDIES. *By Stanley Fish. Duke University Press. Paper, $19.95.*

Reviewed by MICHAEL NETH

Stanley Fish's intellectual ingenuity and argumentative rigor were established in his previous books, *Surprised by Sin* (his controversial study of *Paradise Lost*, published in 1967) and its sequel, *Self-Consuming Artifacts* (1972), and in his first full-length incursion into the arcane realm of literary theory, the collection of essays that Fish, with the interrogative irony and critical hyper-self-consciousness that have become his trademarks, characteristically entitled *Is There a Text in This Class?* (1980). The common thread running through these earlier works is Fish's conviction that literary texts are always and unavoidably interpreted from a finite, contingent perspective, that there is no such thing as a definitive interpretation based on the text's objective meaning. Rather, Fish maintains in the first two books, readers participate in the constitution of a text's meaning by the ways in which they respond to the author's rhetorical strategies. In the latter volume, he speculates that meaning depends on "whatever interpretive assumptions happen to be in force." In either case, objective truth and unchanging meaning are illusions produced and nurtured within the minds of those individual readers—or, in his later work, within those interpretive communities—that fail to understand how completely they exist in a determinate, limited world created in part by their own presuppositions and in part by the accidents of time, place, and circumstance.

Throughout his career, Fish's position has derived from his conviction that reality itself (insofar as we can speak of it at all) is relative and "contextual," and hence that even the greatest creations of literature must be dealt with primarily as verbal constructs. To consider them expressions of the human spirit in its best and highest moments is for Fish an approach that identifies its practitioner as a "foundationalist," or one who subscribes to outmoded, or irrelevant, or insufficiently self-examined notions of rationality, objectivity, and truth. Fish has been a consistent and often brilliant exponent of the skeptical and relativist strands in Western philosophical discourse. His work is informed throughout by the famous sentiment attributed to the Sophist, Protagoras, which he approvingly quotes in his new book: "Man is the measure of all things, of the things that are that they are, and of the things that are not that they are not."

In *Doing What Comes Naturally*, Fish elaborates the breadth and depth of his relativism by extending his discussion to disciplines he has not previously addressed. The volume comprises a series of twenty-two essays, most of them published in a variety of journals over the last decade but a few written expressly for this volume. Among the topics Fish treats are various species of literary theory (most notably deconstruction and the principles of the so-called Frankfurt School), composition the-

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ory, Chomskian linguistics, speech-act theory, Freudian psychoanalysis, and the attitudes of literary critics toward their profession. Fish, who has a dual appointment as professor of law and literature at Duke University, also devotes several pages to analyzing the critical legal studies movement, a post-1960s "group of left-leaning lawyers and law professors who have discovered . . . that rather than being grounded in natural and logical necessity, the legal process always reflects the interests and concerns of some political or economic agenda." It is thus an understatement to describe this as an ambitious book. *Doing What Comes Naturally* is an omnibus critique of some of the most pervasive and influential literary, legal, and psychological dogmas of this century, with special emphasis on those that have flourished in the last several decades. Fish performs his task with admirable cogency: his style is clear, sometimes even eloquent, and his logic is impeccable and unrelenting.

Yet for all this, the book is not without some marked flaws. Fish acknowledges the first of these himself, after a fashion, in his preface, proclaiming that "every essay in this book is the same; no matter what its putative topic each chapter finally reduces to an argument in which the troubles and benefits of interpretive theory are made to disappear in the solvent of an enriched notion of practice." This is a self-aggrandizing way of saying that what Fish has done in these essays is to approach his various target doctrines—and the thinkers whose work most prominently embodies them—with two basic presuppositions. First, all claims that privilege a given theoretical argument in relation to the theories it opposes derive from its author's failure to realize fully that *any* assertion is shaped by historical and social circumstances, and that it is simply impossible to conceive (let alone put into practice) a theory existing above and beyond the web of socio-historical exigencies. Second, all intellectual interpretation and conflict is for Fish finally reducible to "the long quarrel between philosophy and rhetoric, between the external [*sic*] and the temporal, between God's view and point of view." On one side of this ancient dichotomy are, again, the "foundationalists" or "essentialists," those who subscribe to some sort of absolute truth-value (most commonly God or Reason) as the ultimate court of appeal in the dialogue between conflicting ideas. On the other side are the "anti-foundationalists." Describing himself as a "card-carrying" member of this fraternity, Fish explains:

> Anti-foundationalism teaches that questions of fact, truth, correctness, validity, and clarity can neither be posed nor answered in reference to some extra-contextual, ahistorical, nonsituational reality, or rule, or law, or value; rather, anti-foundationalism asserts, all of these matters are intelligible and debatable only within the precincts of the contexts or situations or paradigms or communities that give them their local and changeable shape.

Fish traces the genealogy of anti-foundationalism back to the Greek Sophists and offers a long list of modern adherents, including such figures as Richard Rorty and W. V. Quine in professional philosophy, Clifford Geertz in anthropology, Hayden White in the philosophy of history, Thomas Kuhn in the history of science, Martin Heidegger, Hans-Georg Gadamer, and Jacques Derrida in hermeneutics, and Jonathan Culler and the British Marxist critic Terry Eagleton among literary theorists.

Fish administers his two overarching precepts in almost programmatic fashion to the utterances of his subjects until—as usually happens with reflexively applied intellectual paradigms—he discovers what he had set out to find. Thus, both such traditional humanistic critics as Walter Jackson Bate and E. D. Hirsch, Jr., along with such philosophers as Stephen Toulmin on the one hand and "oppositional critics" and leftist theoreticians of one stripe or another such as Derrida, Eagleton, and the various members of the "Frankfurt School" (Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse) on the other hand—*all* come under fire for not comprehending the intrinsic inescapability of social, political, and historical determinants. Adorno and company set out with a heightened critical self-awareness superior to traditionalist views, in Fish's account, but in the end they appeal just as confidently—and just as mistakenly—as the traditionalists to the formal standards of objective reason. Hence, Fish argues, the Left's "critical project" falls prey to the selfsame rationalist fallacy bedeviling thinkers on the Right.

Fish emphasizes that philosophers and literary theorists from opposite ends of the po-

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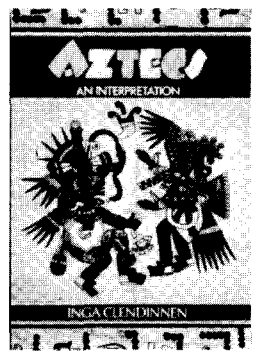

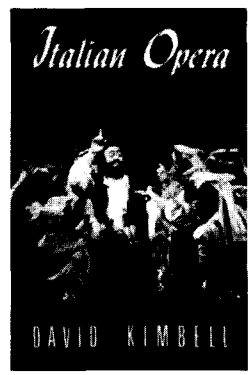

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litical spectrum are not alone in indulging this myopia: equally guilty are Noam Chomsky (in his futile attempt to construct a transcultural "competence model" of language reflecting "the timeless and contextless workings of an abiding formalism"); those who construct theories designed to teach effective writing in college and university composition classes (in encouraging students to do the impossible, to rise above their particular social situation and "identify in nonevaluative ways their own beliefs"); and the devotees of critical legal studies (in their vain efforts to emancipate the social order from the "historical contingencies" that, in their view, elevate some and oppress others). And so on, with a repetitiveness and formulaic predictability that soon cause the book to assume the aura of one large self-fulfilling prophecy.

It is not that Fish is wrong in most of his assertions, or that theoretical thinkers, especially of the Left, do not need to be shown their shortcomings (one thinks especially of some of the so-called new historicists in literary studies who seem constitutionally incapable of grasping the incoherence of their premises). Instead the chief problem with Fish's book is the reader's awareness that any one of the more substantial essays, such as "Consequences" or "Rhetoric," could by itself convey its author's underlying thesis. A lengthy appendix would be sufficient to point out the applications in sundry disciplines.

Just as every essay in *Doing What Comes Naturally* epitomizes the same point, one must remark that there is no great originality in the point itself. In fairness, Fish does not claim novelty as one of his book's virtues: as I have noted, he aligns himself with the Sophists (in their struggle against Socrates) and insists on his kinship to the rhetoricians in their battle with the philosophers. But the sheer length and scope of this work, coupled with Fish's assumption of an almost god-like perspective above and beyond the "intestine broils" of politically and culturally opposed critics, from which vantage point he presumes to reveal the errors of inadequate self-reflection being committed on all sides, suggest that Fish has pretensions to a kind of interpretive primacy. At the very least, one unmistakable implication of this book is that no one has yet gauged the issues at stake as clearly as does Stanley Fish.

But in fact any number of very important antitheses other than those invoked by Fish are equally germane to his enterprise. Even the casual student of the history of philosophy will be reminded when reading Fish of the bifurcation between Plato's ideas and Aristotle's forms, between realist universals and nominalist particulars in scholastic philosophy, between Kant's *noumenon* and *phenomenon*. (Man's inability to comment on the transcendent is not an insight held uniquely by Stanley Fish.) And when, in his argument that theory is wholly inconsequential, Fish stresses the gulf between "rational activity" and "empirical activity" and the former's explanatory role in comprehending the latter, he is surely harking back to Aristotle's distinction between theory and practice. Even Fish's proposition that "many of the issues in interpretive theory can be reduced to a few basic questions in the philosophy of language," which he initially proffers as "one of the theses of this book," is as unremarkable as it is unexceptionable in light of such twentieth-century epistemological developments as logical positivism and, of course, deconstruction. Fish is certainly aware of all these precedents to his undertaking, but he is strangely silent concerning them (except the last), perhaps because, were he to take them into account, it would become even clearer than it already is that his contribution in *Doing What Comes Naturally* is limited to his clarification of how a number of age-old dualities manifest themselves in different trappings in the thought of many prominent and influential modern intellectuals. It has, in short, all been said before—and often more interestingly.

Finally, if one considers Fish's words in the context of his actions, it might appear that *Doing What Comes Naturally* accomplishes its mission with a disturbing degree of disingenuousness. In fact, Fish's life and his work might be seen to dramatize the very distance between universal and relative viewpoints that his book addresses. In the fall of 1990, Fish wrote an open letter to the Duke University campus newspaper in his capacity as chairman of the English department. The letter contained a warning to the university about the establishment of a campus chapter of the National Association of Scholars (N.A.S.), a group of traditionally minded col-

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lege and university faculty formed two years ago with the avowed aim of reestablishing "objectivity on decisions about curriculum, promotion and academic discourse." In his letter, Fish accused the organization of being "racist, sexist, and homophobic." In a subsequent letter to Duke's provost, he ventured the argument that this group's "illiberal" attitudes toward recent developments in scholarship rendered its members unfit to serve on academic committees charged with deciding individual cases of promotion and tenure.

Now there is nothing inconsistent in Fish's action per se; given his view that such notions as "objectivity" are chimeras created in the minds of people whose beliefs are necessarily constrained by their socio-historical situation, and given his clear preference (good Sophist that he strives to be) for the particular, the relative, and even the subversive over the universal and absolute, Fish's opposition to the N.A.S. is understandable and (like so much of his book) predictable. But what troubles is his choice of the terms of attack. The charges of "racism, sexism, and homophobia" have by now taken on the status of clichés; they are jingoistic formulations often employed by those who have closed their minds to the possibility of discourse—precisely the thing that Fish claims to be promoting in tracing the sources of various doctrines in *Doing What Comes Naturally*. Can Fish be genuinely impervious to the likelihood that well-intentioned, thoughtful people might conceivably draw conclusions different from his own in this dispute? By resorting to such hackneyed phrases instead of attempting to engage N.A.S. members in argument, Fish demonstrates that, for all his brilliance, it is he—not they—who has precluded further debate, and he who has appealed to a false absolute. This is a decidedly un-Sophistical strategy. For if Protagoras said that "man is the measure of all things," he is also known to have provided his pupils with opposing arguments in order to teach them that, in W. K. C. Guthrie's words, "there are contrary arguments on every subject." Protagoras's open-mindedness in this practice, so foreign to Plato's own *Weltanschauung*, may be responsible in part for the profound respect that Plato accords Socrates' most formidable rival. It is a lesson Stanley Fish appears to have missed.

Tampering with the Mail

THE LETTERS OF SIGMUND FREUD TO EDUARD SILBERSTEIN, 1871–1881. *Edited by Walter Boehlich, translated by Arnold J. Pomerans. Harvard University Press. $30.*

Reviewed by PAUL ROAZEN

This is the latest in a series of volumes of Freud letters. Earlier there was a 1954, and then a complete 1985, edition of his correspondence to his intimate friend Wilhelm Fliess, a Berlin physician, and a general collection of Freud's correspondence came out in 1960. The other books, containing both sides of exchanges of letters, were with students and disciples: that with Oskar Pfister appeared in 1963, the one with Karl Abraham in 1965, that to Arnold Zweig in 1970, the one with James Jackson Putnam in 1971, and that to Lou Andreas-Salomé in 1972. Perhaps the high point of them all was when the Freud/Jung correspondence was published in 1974; Freud's letters to Edoardo Weiss had come out as a book in 1970.

It has long been known how in 1937 Freud's analysand the Princess George (Marie Bonaparte) paid a German bookseller the equivalent of some $500 for Freud's letters to Fliess. When Freud heard about it he was cross with Fliess's widow for having sold these letters; in fact, Mrs. Fliess was afraid that unless they went to a bookseller they would not get out of the country and survive. In an effort to exert some control over the fate of his Fliess letters Freud offered to share in Marie Bonaparte's expense; she declined for fear of what he might want to do with them, but carefully saw that the correspondence was safeguarded on the Continent throughout World War II. Freud's friendship with Fliess had taken place during the critical years of Freud's creation of the central doctrines of psychoanalysis, and they have been generally considered of key historical significance. So it is a sign of the growth (or inflation) of Freud studies that this latest batch of Freud's letters, written to a Romanian school friend and un-

✪ PAUL ROAZEN, professor of political and social science at York University in Toronto, is the author of *Encountering Freud: The Politics and Histories of Psychoanalysis.*

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concerned with Freud's ultimate professional work should have fetched, over a decade ago, the sum of $100,000.

It is worth starting off with this financial point since such a significant detail nowhere appears in the introduction or the two prefaces to *The Letters of Sigmund Freud to Eduard Silberstein*. Although we now have a small shelfful of books of Freud's letters to go along with the twenty-four-volume James Strachey *Standard Edition* of Freud's psychological works, it is still the case today that the great bulk of Freud's correspondence remains unpublished. The most important new information about Freud will come from the huge quantity of letters still to appear. Since the editing of almost all the Freud letters has been up to now highly questionable, and it looks as if this unfortunately may continue to remain the case, I would like to highlight the general problem associated with our understanding of Freud as a letter writer by looking more closely at the background to the appearance of these letters to Silberstein.

Some twenty years ago a batch of Freud's letters to Silberstein appeared in an obscure Israeli psychiatric journal; they did not then seem especially remarkable, and rather less significant than comparable bits and pieces of Freud's correspondence that were appearing in other more prominent periodicals. More recently the attention of experts has been concentrated on the well-known larger sets of Freud's professional letters, some of which—such as those to Ernest Jones and the ones to Sandor Ferenczi—have editorially been in the works for years. For some curious reason Freud's letters to his fiancée have been, except for use by his official biographer Jones, completely embargoed to outsiders.

I had known that Freud's daughter Anna was very keen about these early letters of her father's to Silberstein. In itself this was remarkable since Anna, Freud's only child to follow him professionally as a psychoanalyst, was so possessive of everything connected with him. Despite all her horror at what she regarded as the invasion of her family's privacy by historians and biographers, not to mention the damage she feared to the practice of psychoanalysis, she personally transcribed these letters to Silberstein. (Once again we hear nothing of this in *The Letters of Freud to Silberstein*.) She was also closely involved in the arrangement by which Kurt Eissler, in behalf of his Freud Archives in New York City, paid all that money for the Silberstein letters. (It remains unclear whether the money went to a dealer, or perhaps even to the Silberstein granddaughter who contributed an important little set of biographical notes to this volume.)

At this point it is necessary to be clear about the distinction between the various organizations, often involving the same people, that have been in charge of Freud's letters. The Freud Archives is now famous if only because of Janet Malcolm's two celebrated 1983 pieces in *The New Yorker*; she was fascinated with the rise and fall of Jeffrey Masson, who was Eissler's chosen successor, as Projects Director of the Freud Archives, for a year. (Masson's libel suit—for ten million dollars—against Malcolm, *The New Yorker*, and Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., has just been considered by the Supreme Court. He had contended that she invented words of his to put within quotation marks, while she claimed to have relied on the spirit of tape-recorded interviews. The Supreme Court was unanimous in reinstating his lawsuit against Malcolm for having concocted libelous quotations and attributed them to him. According to the holding in *Masson v. New Yorker magazine*, the Constitution does not guarantee free speech for fabricated quotations which materially change the meaning of what was actually said. Now that Masson has been successful on the point of law, there will either be a jury trial or an out-of-court settlement.)

The Archives had originally been set up by Eissler, without any great enthusiasm on Anna Freud's part, shortly after World War II. Paradoxically, Jungian money was then a key resource. The Archives was to become the main conduit by which Freud material wound up at the Freud Collection at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. The Archives' status as the official donor of most of the Freud Collection has meant that the Library of Congress, although publicly funded, has had to abide by any restrictions on access that the Archives has seen fit to impose. That situation remains true today.

Nobody has ever offered any evidence that the weird dates by which items at the Freud Collection become accessible to inspection by scholars are the product of anything but

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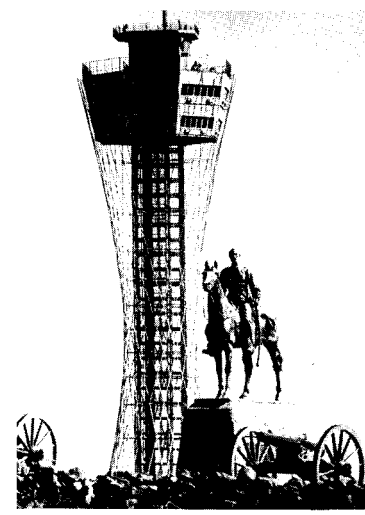

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Eissler's eccentric protectiveness about Freud —some material has been restricted until the twenty-second century. Even people who gave the Archives Freud letters were later unable to retrieve copies of them from the Freud Collection without the express permission of the Archives. Although ultimately Eissler fell from power at the Archives because of his curious choice of Masson, and Eissler's handling of the public controversy connected with him, Eissler still commands some control at the Freud Collection—as Anna Freud's personal representative—over a sizable chunk of material she gave, before her death in 1982, directly to the Freud Collection.

A third institution to keep in mind is the Freud Museum on Maresfield Gardens in London. Freud lived in that house for a bit over a year after being driven into exile from Vienna. He died there, and it was only open to the public in 1986. I would not have thought it necessary to bother singling out the Freud Museum, even though it possesses much of Freud's library, photographs, and documents as well; it has also had trouble keeping a director ideologically satisfactory to orthodox sponsors. But the Supreme Court in the factual summary of its recent decision completely muddled up the Freud Archives with the Freud Museum.

Finally, the Freud Copyrights in London exists to monitor the use of Freud's writings, and also to make money for Freud's literary heirs. Here a provision in Freud's final will bore directly on the trouble connected with getting the Silberstein letters in print. Freud, much to Anna Freud's annoyance, left the royalties on his works to his grandchildren. This decision on his part, which she claimed was owing to pressure from two of her brothers, meant years of added tension between herself and her nephews and niece. For it set up a conflict of interest between them over the future publication of Freud's letters; the Freud Copyrights, and therefore the grandchildren, stood to gain from any such new books, while Anna Freud had her own agenda for protecting what she regarded as the dignity of her father's "cause." (Her standards could be hard to fathom; she objected publicly to John Huston's film version of Freud, initially written by Jean-Paul Sartre and starring Montgomery Clift.)

It is a sign of the taboos that still exist in this field that until I decided to put Freud's last will into print in an article in *The Journal of the American Academy of Psychoanalysis* in 1990 it had remained unpublished. There has been a laughable amount of chaos about "secrets," so that while the copy of the will at the Freud Collection was sealed until the year 2007 (Eissler came up with that date; and once it was established, his successors maintained it), the document had been on public record in London ever since it was first probated after Freud's death in 1939.

To bring this background to bear on the Silberstein letters, the Freud Archives had laid out all that money, and then naturally wanted some share of the proceeds from the publication of the volume. However, books of letters, even those by Freud, do not usually sell well. Eventually a compromise was agreed on, so that there would be a fifty-fifty division of proceeds between the Archives and the Freud Copyrights.

Now the Freud Archives has never had much in the way of funds itself. So that when Masson decided to sue against his dismissal, he included in his legal case his former supporter Muriel Gardiner. Gardiner may be best known publicly as the supposed model for Lillian Hellman's "Julia"; Hellman denied it, but her capacity for telling tall tales was notorious. Gardiner herself had her own ideological agenda that could lead her, too, to tailor the truth. One of her avocations was keeping track of Freud's famous patient the Wolf-Man, and she always did her best, whatever the Wolf-Man himself may have said, to put Freud's handling of that case in the best possible light. She was immensely rich and sent the Wolf-Man regular funds. (She was also for years the financial angel behind *Dissent* magazine.) Gardiner was so much a member of Anna Freud's faction that she set up a foundation to buy Freud's London house, where Anna lived, so that it could be eventually made into a museum. Masson's including her in his law suit was practical; she had been involved in enabling him to be hired at the Archives, and so it was her money that also went to pay for the Masson out-of-court legal settlement.

It was Muriel Gardiner who had made possible the purchase of the Freud letters to Silberstein. Finding the right editor was a problem, but at no time did anybody involved

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seem to think that it might be appropriate to go outside the immediate psychoanalytic family. One German woman analyst (now in charge of publishing the more than thousand letters from Freud to his future wife) declined the job; anyway, Anna Freud complained about working with her. And then Masson—even when he was being trusted before the publicity over his obsession with the idea that the sexual seduction of children accounts for the origin of neurosis, and that Freud had cowardly retreated from his early tenets—seemed unsuitable. Apparently Masson had wanted to dissect the letters through the use of modern psychoanalytic theories about adolescence, and Anna Freud thought such a procedure approximated textual sacrilege.

She was convinced that the letters to Silberstein were unique, the best biographical material ever available about Freud, even though after publication she wanted assurances that no more of Freud's letters would appear for years. It is a safe guess that she would not be happy about the course that events have recently taken. For a new organization, the Freud Literary Heritage Foundation, has now been set up, once again with Eissler in charge, which has undertaken to raise funds in order to bring out complete editions of Freud's letters with friends and colleagues, as well as family members.

Muriel Gardiner is now no longer alive, but for a time it had seemed natural, once Masson was out of the picture, that she herself edit the letters to Silberstein. But she was already old and sick, and every time she put her mind to working on the Silberstein correspondence her blood pressure went up precipitously. She could not forgive the way Masson had, she felt, taken financial advantage of her, so in the end, on medical grounds, she bowed out of the editorial job.

At last we have the letters to Silberstein, edited by Walter Boehlich; I know nothing about him except that he has chosen to ignore the complex history behind the appearance of this correspondence. He tells us only that "thanks to the initiative of Dr. Kurt R. Eissler and a donation from Muriel Gardiner, the Sigmund Freud Archives were able to acquire the originals at the end of the 1970s." He himself "relied mainly on photographs." It is to me alarming to find him, among his many acknowlegments, singling out for thanks "the esteemed Kurt R. Eissler," even though for more than forty years Eissler has been a watchdog for psychoanalytic orthodoxy.

One does not know what to make of it, but a number of letters to Silberstein appear to have vanished. This is most striking in connection with the fact that Silberstein's first wife came from Romania in 1891 to consult Freud psychotherapeutically in Vienna. It turns out that she committed suicide by throwing herself from the fourth floor of Freud's apartment house. Boehlich tells us merely that she killed herself "without having seen Freud." Yet in an appendix to this book we are informed by a Silberstein grandchild that the woman had become "mentally ill, was treated unsuccessfully by his friend Sigmund Freud, and threw herself from a window in Freud's apartment building. This tragedy was corroborated by Anna Freud." And a 1928 letter of Freud's, after Silberstein's own death, says that Freud "once had occasion to attend to his first wife." There are no letters here more directly connected with the death of that wife.

I would think that Silberstein himself must have done away with such letters for the sake of his own privacy and that of his wife; there is no sign of any later reproach in him against Freud. As of 1910 Silberstein was evidently still recommending further patients to Freud. Perhaps Freud was unhappy with the capacity of Silberstein (then some sort of businessman) to pick diagnostically patients who were suitable. In any event, Freud wrote back in 1910, at a time when he did not, as in later years, have his time filled with pupils from abroad: "The patients you mention are welcome to call; I shall refer them to my many pupils, who will treat them as I suggest, but I myself cannot take on anything more this season."

I do not suspect Anna Freud, or someone in her behalf, of having deliberately done away with evidence pertaining to the suicide of Silberstein's first wife. If Anna had found something in the correspondence that put her father in any kind of bad light, she would presumably not have been enthusiastic about bringing out the letters in the first place. True, her historical vision was clouded by filial piety, but by the 1970s she must have been on her toes about the significant issue of suicide among psychoanalytic patients. (She did, however, remain strangely unremorseful when her intimate friend Dorothy Burling-

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ham's older daughter, who had been in analysis with Anna since early childhood, killed herself in 1974 while staying at Anna Freud's house, where Dorothy lived, too, in London.) Anna facilitated the acquisition of these letters, with money from Muriel Gardiner, because, I think, she admired them so much.

Yet for years Anna had felt free to pencil out anything she chose in Freud's published correspondence. In spite of this arbitrariness, somehow the historical fraternity has not succeeded in challenging Anna Freud's almost unquestioned North American public standing. I first brought up the issue of the censorship of Freud's letters in a couple of footnotes to a 1968 book of mine; no reviewer, even in professional journals, took notice of what I had said. Then, with my book *Brother Animal* in 1969, I gave an appalling example of an excision from a Freud letter in connection with Victor Tausk's suicide. After that there was no more such tampering with Freud letters. Previously passages could be dropped without even the presence of the appropriate marks indicating a deletion. That is why "complete" editions of Freud's letters to Abraham, Pfister, and Zweig, for example, are now necessary, for the earlier ones are all chopped up in ways that are historiographically incomprehensible.

But starting in 1989 we have had to worry about missing Freud letters. For once his correspondence to his sister-in-law Minna became unrestricted, a mystery started about how some of them from a key period can have vanished. People have had a curious prurient interest about Freud and Minna. She was important both emotionally and intellectually to him, but—although this seems unfathomable in our age of sexual preoccupation—I still think he relied on relaxing with her at card playing.

As long as Freud letters continue to come out under the auspices of the same narrow orthodox psychoanalytic faction, then independent observers have every right to remain on their guard. Partisanship can take multiple forms, including of course the alternatives that exist for translations. One wishes that before signing contracts university presses would submit these manuscripts to the normal channels of outside readership; those who choose to endorse the editing of such texts would then be publicly quotable and would be held to account for their advice. Since the editing of Freud's letters is still not in impartial hands, scholars cannot rest assured that the best possible job has been undertaken.

The circumstances surrounding the publication of the Freud-Silberstein letters are so significant just because they turn out to be remarkably interesting. Some people have been tempted to allow themselves to think that everything important about Freud has already essentially been known, and now along comes a set of letters that presents us with a Freud we have not encountered before. He is only fifteen years old at the beginning of this correspondence, and the letters last until the friendship peters out a little more than nine years later. Freud was in the full tide of his youth, and one can be grateful that there is nothing here of the acrimony that one so often finds in his later years.

It is true that Freud and his friend Silberstein had set up between them a secret society, the Spanish Academy, of which they were the sole members; and they even had a seal made for their "society." (Freud jokes about their being entitled to have a historian.) They often wrote to one another in Spanish, taking their signatures from two dogs in one of Cervantes's tales. Here is a Freud who was altogether more warm and outgoing than he is apt to sound in later years.

For example, after a trip to relatives in England in 1875, Freud was moved to reflect on his aim as a "scientist" to "reduce or wipe out some of the ills that afflict our body." England, he thought, would be "just the place" where "a respected man, supported by the press and the rich, could do wonders in alleviating physical ills, if only he were enough of an explorer to strike out on new therapeutic paths." In his autobiographical reminiscences as an old man, Freud would claim that he had never had such humanitarian hopes. At the same time we do get intimations here of how harsh Freud could be. In 1877 we find him writing a letter at the age of twenty-one in

> a kind of crisis intended to rid me of morbid matter. I wish for all the rabble found on this earth to be struck down by heavenly thunder and the world to become so depopulated that one would encounter just one human being every three miles. If this wish remains unfulfilled, posterity will rue the day. A

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certain number of scoundrels is quite acceptable, for it helps people to grow hot under the collar, but too many are unhealthy.

If there is one single overriding aspect to Freud in these letters, it has to be in connection with just how absorbed with philosophizing he was as a young man. The editor has done nothing significant to help us compare Freud's youthful involvements with Ludwig Feuerbach, Franz Brentano, and Nietzsche in relation to Freud's mature convictions. It is startling to find Freud, who in later years claimed to have always abhorred philosophy, here so preoccupied with it.

In some of Freud's earliest remarks to Silberstein he is mainly concerned about what letter writing itself means to him. For the rest of Freud's life he remained remarkably anxious, as here, to get word from correspondents. Freud said he had a special "need for communication," at the same time that he felt it had to be by means of a secret code. (Freud and Silberstein agreed on disguised terminology: for example, "principles" turn out to have meant "girls.") Freud characteristically cursed "the invention of postcards," which robbed him of some deeply sought letters from Silberstein: "The world grows more prosaic with every new invention; in the end, letters will fall into disuse and be replaced by telegrams. Then we shall be able to correspond with a friend for a decade without so much as catching a glimpse of his handwriting." Even in later years Freud stuck to his own difficult script rather than rely on a typewriter, and only on the rarest occasion is he known to have received a telephone call.

We now have a record of Freud falling in love for the first time, and how it also involved his feelings for the young woman's mother. Freud was more devoted to humanistic studies than one might have imagined, although Silberstein does get teased for his commitment to being a social democrat. Freud tells about enrolling in swimming classes, and increasingly discusses his reading of books. Although I have given my reasons for being dubious about the overall editing of this volume, Boehlich has been extraordinarily conscientious in filling the reader in on obscure literary allusions.

At times Freud may sound sententious: "A letter demands a degree of composure, or artistic calm, a letter is nothing if not an exercise in the so-called liberal arts in which one can take pleasure only when the din of the daily round and cares has been silenced." Freud was eighteen at the time he wrote this. Within a year his friendship for Silberstein was such that Freud could write him:

> I really believe that we shall never be rid of each other; though we became friends from free choice, we are as attached to one another as if nature had put [us] on this earth as blood relations; I believe that we have come so far that the one loves the very person of the other and not, as before, merely his good qualities; and I am afraid that were you, by an unworthy act, to prove quite different tomorrow from the image I keep of you, I could still not cease to wish you well.

Not one single line of Silberstein's, to Freud or anybody else, seems to have survived. Natural writers like Freud have to throw things out, while others like Silberstein were left saving Freud's letters. Freud's correspondence to Silberstein grows more and more interesting the further one gets into it, and it whets the appetite for what is to come in the future. It is still up in the air whether we shall next see Freud's love letters to his wife Martha, or the correspondence with Ernest Jones, or the long-delayed exchange of letters with Sandor Ferenczi. If only university presses would self-respectingly stand their ground, and refuse to be merely agents of the ancien régime in psychoanalysis, we would be better able to appreciate the scale of Freud's genius.

Ambiguous Defection

BENEDICT ARNOLD: PATRIOT AND TRAITOR. *By Willard Sterne Randall. William Morrow & Co. $27.95.*

Reviewed by JOHN WAUCK

Shortly after Benedict Arnold defected to the British in 1780, the royal governor of New York wrote exultantly to London: "Arnold, the boldest and most enterprising of the rebel

✪ JOHN WAUCK works as an editor and translator in New York.

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generals, lives with me and sits by me while I write." After detailing Arnold's military achievements, the governor concluded, "He squabbled with a Reed, the Congress sided with the last, and Arnold thought himself ill-used and found means, eighteen months ago, to offer his service to the King. . . . Arnold does nothing by halves." His succinct and only slightly simplified summary of Benedict Arnold's career and character is quoted in Willard Sterne Randall's new biography, *Benedict Arnold: Patriot and Traitor.* The fruit of years of research in England, Canada, and the United States, illustrated with maps and portraits of the dramatis personae, Randall's is the most comprehensive biography we have (the one glaring flaw in this otherwise impressive volume is its oddly cursory index, printed in large type to hide its scantiness).

Benedict Arnold's years as an American officer were spent opposing the British threat from Canada. When fighting broke out in 1775, the thirty-four-year-old Benedict Arnold, a ship's captain and smuggler in Connecticut, proposed and helped lead the first American offensive of the war, a raid on Fort Ticonderoga to seize its artillery. The same winter he led a grueling march to besiege Quebec via Maine's Kennebec River, a feat popularly likened to Hannibal's crossing of the Alps that made Arnold the first military hero of the Revolution. In the spring, at Lake Champlain, Arnold created and commanded the first American navy in its attack upon a British invasion fleet at Valcour Island. Outnumbered and outgunned, he inflicted such heavy damage upon the British fleet that the northern invasion was postponed until the following year, when General Burgoyne led the British army down the Hudson. At Saratoga, on October 7, 1777, despite being stripped of his command by General Horatio Gates, Arnold spurred his horse into battle and, before being shot in the leg, personally led the American troops to a decisive victory over Burgoyne.

When the British withdrew from Philadelphia in 1778, the now partially crippled Arnold was appointed military governor of the city. The following spring he began his treasonous correspondence with Major John André, Britain's foppish young spy master in New York. Their plan to betray West Point (the group of forts on the Hudson under Arnold's command) to the British, at a time when Washington and Lafayette were likely to be there, came within a hair's breadth of success. Returning from a secret meeting with Arnold, within sight of the British lines near Tarrytown, John André was stopped by three highwaymen. Stripping him, the robbers discovered the plans for West Point's fortifications in his stockings. When word of André's capture reached Arnold, he immediately fled to a British warship on the Hudson. André was convicted of spying and hanged a week later (a talented poet and draughtsman, he was eventually buried in Poets' Corner at Westminster Abbey).

Unwelcome in Whig England where he lived (he fought a duel with a Whig politician who insulted him), detested in the America he had fled, Arnold returned to shipping after the war. Randall recounts how Talleyrand, fleeing from France to Philadelphia in 1793, met "an American" at an English inn and asked for letters of introduction for America. The American refused and, as Talleyrand tells it, "after a few moments of silence, noticing my surprise, he added, 'I am perhaps the only American who cannot give you letters for his own country: all the relations I had there are now broken. I must never return.' He dared not tell me his name. It was General Arnold! I must confess that I felt much pity for him, for which political puritans will perhaps blame me, for I witnessed his agony." After living for several years in Canada, Arnold died on June 14, 1801, in London, where his body lies in an unmarked grave.

William Sterne Randall, a veteran journalist who now teaches British and American history at the University of Vermont, tells Arnold's complicated tale with a superior reporter's skill, handling particularly well the complex, often crisscrossing correspondence that made the war and the secret negotiations between Arnold and the British confusing both for the participants and for subsequent historians.

While passing no judgment on Arnold's treason, Randall renders it comprehensible. An expert on divided loyalties during the Revolution (his previous book dealt with Benjamin Franklin and his illegitimate son, William, a prominent loyalist), Randall stresses American ambivalence toward inde-

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pendence, noting, for instance, that at the end of the war thirty-five thousand American loyalists had to be evacuated from New York City, and ninety-eight loyalist regiments were disbanded and offered lands in Canada.

The extent to which Arnold's treason was an ideological or spiritual about-face is difficult to determine. Like many Americans, Arnold had not entered the war in order to fight for independence. After capturing Ticonderoga, he had issued a Declaration of Principles in which he vowed to fight "until a reconciliation between Great Britain and America on Constitutional principles." By 1778, when the British were offering to rectify the grievances of 1776, continued warfare may have begun to seem pointless and counter-productive. When Arnold wrote to André, he took the code name "Monk," after George Monk, one of Oliver Cromwell's generals, who became a national hero because he conspired to restore the monarchy when the English Revolution had run amok.

Nevertheless, if Arnold had never been injured, it is unlikely that he would ever have changed sides. It was while military governor of Philadelphia that he observed the vindictive political cross fire between Congress and the state governments, and became a bitter enemy of such radical revolutionaries as Joseph Reed who, when the Americans took back Philadelphia, wanted to hang five hundred Tories for treason. Moreover, it was in Philadelphia that Arnold married Peggy Shippen, a young loyalist who had befriended Major André during the British occupation of Philadelphia.

It is true that, as the royal governor of New York expressed it, Arnold "thought himself ill-used." Having risked his fortune and his life fighting for the colonies, often paying military expenses from his own pocket, he found himself repeatedly harassed and insulted by Congress. Several times he was hauled before courts of inquiry on false, politically motivated charges of looting and financial corruption. The final indignity was a court martial on charges of abusing his military governorship for financial gain. Although Arnold was eventually acquitted of any intentional wrongdoing, he was convicted of "acts to the prejudice of good order and military discipline."

He was never reimbursed by Congress for the money he personally spent on his troops, nor was he ever paid his salary. His troops revered him and bore testimony to his prowess as a leader, yet Congress repeatedly promoted manifestly less qualified officers over him, and he saw his respected friends—officers such as Morgan, Schuyler, Sullivan, Greene, and Knox—suffer similar abuse from Congress.

Brooding in Philadelphia, thoroughly disgusted with the politicians who were running the war, intimate with British sympathizers, Arnold began to question his loyalties. The notion of becoming a "traitor" was unlikely to daunt him. All the rebels had already conspired and fought against one country to which they owed their allegiance; if the abuses of the British Parliament justified the colonists' rebellion, did not the abuses of the American Congress justify his own? Surely he had not fought for the right to be governed by the petty, inept, and ungrateful politicians he believed were harassing him. Judging from Congress's performance, he came to believe that the colonies would not benefit from self-governance.

That Arnold should have thought so is not surprising. In 1780 Washington himself wrote, "Unless a system very different from that which has long prevailed be immediately adopted throughout the states, our affairs must soon become desperate, beyond the possibility of recovery. Indeed, I have almost ceased to hope." While others seemed resigned to the post-war chaos—the misrule of Congress, the squabbling states, the meddling hand of France—which he accurately foresaw without guessing that it would ever be overcome, Arnold decided to prevent it. His virtues—daring, resourcefulness, imagination, a refusal to do anything "by halves"—which had won so many victories for the Continental Army, had become the impetus for treason.

The "patriot and traitor" that emerges from Randall's biography was a magnificent soldier and, in the end, a tragic figure, against whom circumstance and character conspired to bring ignominy and the hatred of a nation for which he had sacrificed much. The tension and complexity in Randall's portrait is reflected in the words of one veteran of the march to Quebec who recalled spotting Arnold in a Canadian port after the war: "I sat upon the ship's deck [to] watch the movements of my old com-

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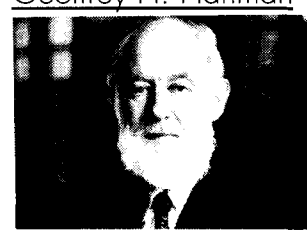

Geoffrey Hartman's new book, in which he urges us not to ignore the culture wars, is both a survey of the history of literary criticism in the last one hundred years and a strategic intervention. He argues for a broader conception of critical style, one that would support the open and conversational voice of the public critic as well as the inventive and innovative practice of the technical critic.

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mander who had carried us through everything, and for whose skill and courage I retained my former admiration, despite his treason. But when I thought of what he had been and the despised man he then was, tears would come, and I could not help it."

Benedict Arnold: Patriot and Traitor seems to bear out the conclusion of Washington's biographer, J. F. Schroeder, that "Benedict Arnold's country and the world owe him more than they will ever liquidate; and his defection can never obliterate the solid services and the ample abuse which preceded it."

Beauty and the Beastly

VLADIMIR NABOKOV: THE RUSSIAN YEARS, 1899–1940. *By Brian Boyd. Princeton University Press. $25.*

Reviewed by WILLIAM VESTERMAN

The great stars of style project enormous forces that warp the literary space around them and draw everything approaching into orbit. Not only Boswell but every major writer on Samuel Johnson eventually reflects Johnson's own manner at some remove, when melancholy moderation tempers magisterial meaning in cadenced conclusion. Henry James elaborates and refines both the consciousness and the writing of his reader. Hemingway's critics tend to be tight-lipped; Thomas Pynchon's fans lead lives of voluble desperation as they pursue along divergent lines of abstruse analogies the infinite regression of some ultimate Q.E.D.

In 1967, only five years after *Pale Fire*'s version of a biographer cum critic with an allegorical name, many people were absolutely sure that the Kinbotean antics in Andrew Field's first biography, *Nabokov: His Life in Art,* had been composed by the left hand of the great man himself. Surely he had anticipated careerists by making himself his *own* "field," defended by barbed-wire wit and barrage balloons of anticipatory parody. The faithful responded the same way some years later when a hilarious Freudian reading of Nabokov appeared, and the rebuttal by the subject himself in the *New York Times Book Review* only made the putative authorship of the criticism more fascinating.

Nabokov's vast flood of special light illuminated invisible ink within the signatures of other leading critics and revealed more neo-Dickensian secret identities. Was Alfred Appel *(The Annotated* Lolita) only a kind of "Eden-red" version of that far-from-innocent annotator with another allusive name, John Ray, Jr., who begins *Lolita*? Was the soi-disant Page Stegner ("Stainer?") a writer for real, or was *Nabokov's Dark Cinema* only more *Laughter in the Dark*? The same action-at-a-distance affects even the asteroid belt of minor commentary. It was I who first discovered to a hushed world the names of Nabokov's pre-Véra fiancées in his first European phase; can it, then, be mere coincidence that the banal love poem that was Nabokov's first try at publication is revealed by the present book to have appeared in *Vestnik Europa*?

As Humbert finds in the style of Quilty's clues something oddly like (yet mocking of) his own personality, as V. becomes increasingly absorbed into the real life of Sebastian Knight by living out Knight's figures of speech and even meeting his characters, so it is with ardent readers of Nabokov. And so it is that Brian Boyd, who boldly aims at a definitive literary biography, must struggle to achieve escape velocity from the life and work he hopes to define.

A contest over who shall be the observer and who the observed begins biographically with Boyd's description of Nabokov's childhood and critically with his general approach to literature. The approach is metaphysical, like that of another Dr. Boyd, the speaker at a religious convention in the Enchanted Hunters, the hotel where Humbert first gains full sexual possession of Lolita and begins to lose her in every other way. Asked in the men's room what he thought of that talk, Humbert, who hadn't heard it, remarked only that "Boyd was quite a boy."

It is not easy for a reader to keep from hearing the same airy irony from the ghost of Nabokov early in this biography when the major source of the life is the writing in *Speak, Memory.* Two of Boyd's solutions to the problem of independent narration—almost word-

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for-word paraphrases and liberal doses of Nabokov's own words without quotation marks—make for an authorized biography in another sense than that disclaimed in the acknowledgments. Anyone who has read and loved *Speak, Memory* will find that attending to Boyd on Nabokov's youth is like driving around the neighborhood with someone just learning to use a standard transmission. The clutch pops, Nabokov's half-remembered phrasing sporadically engages, or tries to, and the reader lurches on.

But the ride becomes much smoother and the road less familiar when Boyd moves to such topics as those of Nabokov's father's political history and the tangled issues of the Russian Revolution in the early days before the Bolshevik coup. Also solidly and gracefully explained are almost all the personal, social, cultural, and financial aspects of Nabokov's first European years of exile when he gradually transformed himself into a leading poet and master novelist in Russian before fleeing to English and America in 1940. The biographical part of the book makes a great advance beyond Andrew Field's efforts in three different tries.

Interwoven critical sections make about half of Boyd's book by pages. In them he summarizes and analyzes Nabokov's works at lengths that vary with what he considers their relative merits. And whether or not one agrees with his standards of judgment, Boyd's patience and consistency as a critic of artistic value give refreshing clarity to his use of the word *important*, a term that nowadays so frequently serves merely as a prop for a posture. Like Nabokov, Boyd sees *The Gift* as the greatest novel of the Russian period in question. But he has strong reservations about some works, such as *King, Queen, Knave* and *Despair*, and his firm rankings of these and other books will no doubt stimulate useful discussions about the sheer variety of performance in Nabokov's forty or so books.

Boyd's criticism presents longtime admirers of Nabokov with premises that are frankly revisionist. His general critical approach is, as I have said, metaphysical. He begins by proposing that Nabokov's distaste for "discursive fiction" has led

many readers to assume he is all style and no content. In fact he was deeply serious as a think-

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er—an epistemologist, metaphysician, moral philosopher, and aesthetician. I will trace the development of his philosophical views, sketch their final shape and suggest how they influenced his art.

The apparent audience of this flourish is the unbeliever. Still, while no one who already admires Nabokov will be surprised by praise for the power and range of his thought, the word *influence* will surely give old hierophants pause, especially in its implied critical assumptions about literary priority and artistic cause and effect.

A little later in the introduction, Boyd describes his general sense of what Nabokov's philosophical thought is:

Independence and pattern focus like the complementary twin hemispheres of Nabokov's mind. He searches out pattern in the music of a phrase or the spell of an anagram, in the shapes of time or the weave of the universe. He pursues independence in everything from his own sense of self to his philosophy of history, from his politics or aesthetics to his way of looking at a face or a tree.

In spite of the up-to-date note sounded with "complementary twin hemispheres," this soaring song ends in "a tree," the usual resting place of philosophical exemplification; and the general terms themselves, though Boyd never says so, make a variation on the age-old philosophical problem commonly called "the one and the many." Boyd, however, often talks as if Nabokov is someone who invents or discovers rather than entertains or addresses or dramatizes basic philosophical issues, and such a stance naturally tends to suggest very few connections. Apparently favoring "independence" over "pattern" in his own critical values, Boyd generally passes up chances to set Nabokov beside his cultural contemporaries in Europe and America, philosophers and littérateurs, modernist and otherwise. Neither are other literary critics often mentioned.

Boyd explores the general implications of his thesis at length in a chapter called "Nabokov the Writer"—chapter 13, oddly enough. It begins: "The true story of Nabokov's art is the story of his finding the formal and fictional inventiveness to express all the problems his philosophy poses." How would Nabokov reply—how has he already replied—to the literary assumptions here? That any reading offering to tell us "what this guy is really trying to say" assumes that the author is only trying, but hasn't quite made it, while the critic *can* say just what was intended, and in more important terms, and without so much fuss? That if reading were really like receiving a "message," it would be ridiculous for us to care about the message's type font, or the paper it appeared on, or whether the messenger be angel, man, or carrier pigeon? That reading is an adventure not an itinerary?

Boyd's ideas about the meaning of art are too crude to be well suited to an appreciation of a writer so inventively concerned with the issue. The results show up in both his biographical and his critical treatments. For example, Nabokov tells us in *Speak, Memory* that he brought his first poem to his mother in "foolish innocence," never doubting that she "would greet my achievement with glad tears of pride. . . . Never in my life had I craved more for her praise. Never had I been more vulnerable." In *Speak, Memory* he finishes reciting to her in a state of poetic abstraction:

She was smiling ecstatically through the tears that streamed down her face. "How wonderful, how beautiful," she said, and with the tenderness in her smile still growing, she passed me a hand mirror so that I might see the smear of blood on my cheekbone where at some indeterminable time I had crushed a gorged mosquito by the unconscious act of propping my cheek on my fist.

Compare this to Boyd, oblivious both to the early life and the late art in the funny and delicate scene:

He roamed through the park, caught up in a trance of composition. Late that evening he recited the finished poem to his mother—his father had been suddenly called to town in connection with the threat of war—and as he finished, he saw her "smiling ecstatically through the tears that streamed down her face. 'How wonderful, how beautiful,' she said"—a judgment the adult Nabokov would be the first to repudiate.

Of the many points this passage misses, the one Boyd seems least equipped to understand is that she isn't talking about the poem. Judgment! Repudiate! Nabokov cherishes in memory and artfully expresses the unshakable confidence of love in mother and son that allows her to be touched by the intensity of his poetic

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fervor rather than by the stage of philosophical development marked in his poem. The same love assures that the mosquito is the only one crushed.

Similarly, Boyd understands neither Nabokov's attitude toward the art of fiction nor the different senses in which fiction dramatizes life in author and character. Boyd's discussion of *Despair* concludes:

> Nabokov's sheer intelligence crackles in every line of *Despair*, but for all the brio of the book's style something seems sadly lacking in its structure. Hermann allows Nabokov to parody his own sense of art as a step beyond the self and toward a sympathy for others perhaps even richer than life allows. Nabokov has never inverted values he holds dear with more gusto or glee, but Hermann's supposition that another face looks like his remains a brittle and meager basis for a whole novel.

Boyd should know from the lives of less upright authors that, if Nabokov really believed the practice of literature to be somehow synonymous with morality or sympathy for others, his was a very foolish philosophy. But, in fact, Hermann does not serve Nabokov to "invert" what Boyd calls earlier the "moral positive" of artistic endeavor. Boyd assumes that art is noble and selfless and says that "Hermann's bloated sense of self and his obliviousness to everyone else makes him for Nabokov the antithesis of the artist." Antithesis? The example of Nabokov's first poem quoted earlier shows a common occupational disease.

Unlike Hermann, whose views of the artist's higher nature Boyd seems compelled to share, Nabokov saw art steadily and saw it whole. It is precisely because authors have become so sentimentalized that Nabokov for the most part avoids treating writers and writing directly, as his friend and fellow poet Vladislav Khodasevich pointed out in the 1930s. Boyd does not mention Khodasevich's very enlightening appreciation, one that helps to explain Nabokov's choice of subjects.

Nabokov chooses murderers such as Hermann as his characters for the same reason that he chooses a chess master like Luzhin in *The Defense*. Boyd approves of Luzhin because he is a dear fellow and a good man, but for both protagonists, "plots" and "moves" (and all the imaginative effort needed to achieve the envisioned goals of those plans)

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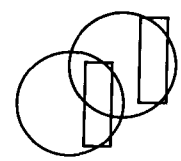

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are matters of life and death, of sanity and insanity, as they are figuratively for the writer. Like his fellow modernists, Nabokov loves to dramatize the many literary means of production and the vast executive powers needed to manage them successfully. These means (among them, plot) work with materials that include, but are not limited to, ideas and values. Such materials are available to everyone and are also used by philosophers and others in their own constructions. But the mere use of some material, or the possession of some of the means of production, or a willingness to work hard—none of these is enough for success.

Like Humbert later, Hermann confuses art and life and treats people as if they were merely fictional characters of his own creation. He thereby lacks "vision," among other things, and it is *his* plot that fails—not Nabokov's. Or rather, Nabokov's plot fails to support his book only if the first-time reader sees before the proper moment how and why Hermann has unconsciously demonstrated from the beginning that he is wrong about art and life—or if the re-reader fails to see the now plain evidence with delight, just as Hermann, looking back, sees it with shame and despair. But not with guilt, to whose origins in justice (rather than in power) Hermann feels himself superior.

For Nabokov, artistic power is not above morality or even nature. Yet at its best the artistic imagination creates new "worlds" whose operations are understandable in the best terms of human nature. Art at its best thereby generates compelling metaphors for the metaphysical. It is not superhuman but shows us what an admirable supernature would be like. A novel projects this simulacrum not through the values of its characters, but through the values of its style, not (in Nabokov's terms) through "text" but through "texture."

Nabokov's style might be characterized as the comic sublime. His sense of the grotesque fully underwrites the value of his beauty, because, like Flannery O'Connor, he could still tell the difference. Further, as many readers have pointed out, Nabokov resembles his creature Sebastian Knight in using parody as a springboard to reach the highest themes. The parody also acts to protect its user from any very easy appropriation of his authorial and personal identities. What other author could make us question his biographers' surnames or their chapter numbers? With a new book of his own almost every other year, not only has Nabokov been undeterred by death from maintaining the smart publishing pace he set when alive, but, if challenged, he can still successfully fight duels of honor with the weapons of his choice.

A Medium's Message

THE LETTERS OF THE REPUBLIC: PUBLICATION AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY AMERICA. *By Michael Warner. Harvard University Press. $25.*

Reviewed by DIANA SCHAUB

"A native of America who cannot read and write is as rare an appearance as a Jacobite or a Roman Catholic, that is, as rare as a comet or an earthquake." In his anti-Romish and anti-monarchic newspaper essay (now known as the *Dissertation on the Canon and Feudal Law*), John Adams drew an explicit link between American letters and American liberty. In fact, he sketched a short history of the world in which the diffusion of knowledge via the printed word catalyzes political progress by awakening opposition to ecclesiastical and civil tyranny. Michael Warner, an associate professor of English at Rutgers University, is also interested in the link between publication and republicanism. As he explains it: "I shall examine the connections between the cultural matrix of the medium and the metapolitics of the speech within it, showing how those connections reshaped power."

Although Warner does not always speak the fashionable argot of up-to-the-moment literary criticism, he does so often and egregiously enough to mar one's reading pleasure. Moreover, on some occasions his "*meta*-izing" leads to the sacrifice of intelligibility as well as readability. For instance, what is one to make of the following: "By the paradoxical logic of literal intellection, though the 'I' must be entirely occulted as the designing agent

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detached from any of the phenomena from which its existence is inferred, it is also seen as perfectly transparent"; or "Language, far from being transparent, has become in its ambiguity the site of social conflict, even while the resolution of that conflict must be received from an authority immanent in the language." Worse yet, as far as I can determine, such sacrifices are quite unnecessary. Warner has allowed a fine, unblemished herd of interesting historical insights to be burnt on the alter of a false theoretical framework. Alienating and obfuscatory language may be integral to the radical assault upon meaning waged by deconstruction, but I am unconvinced that it was necessary to Warner's undertaking. One almost wonders whether, in the current climate of inquisitorial avant-gardism at American universities, there might not be a new type of Marrano, in whom postmodern pretensions serve to disguise more traditional allegiances. Unfortunately, the conformity of ambitious young scholars is more likely unthinking than exoteric. Yet readers with the patience for it can manage to transpose Warner's twelve-tone composition to something on a more melodic scale.

Warner has written an interesting and even unorthodox study, not least because he challenges the reigning techno-determinism of his fellow historians of print (McLuhanites of one stripe or another). According to the McLuhanite medium-as-message model, print technology possesses an inherent and powerful logic capable of giving a particular shape to human affairs and, indeed, to human consciousness. As Warner notes, politics and human agency, whether individual or collective, are expunged from the story of the democratization of print when print itself is thus viewed as the prime democratizing and rationalizing force. In the work of these historians,

> religion, science, capitalism, republicanism, and the like appear insofar as they are affected by printing, not for the way they have entered into the constitution and meaning of print in the first place. The result is that enlightenment and democratization, instead of being seen as politically contested aspects of social organization, now appear as the exfoliation of material technology.

In *The Letters of the Republic*, Warner has set himself the daunting task of giving a more adequate account of the relationship between the print medium and what he regards as the more enveloping medium of culture. He proceeds by means of a case study, tracing the shifting and reciprocal determination of print and politics in colonial America.

In John Adams's polemical essay of 1765, Adams had emphasized the classical learning and libraries of the early Puritans, playing down their religious enthusiasm. He strove to present freedom of inquiry and of the press ("let every sluice of knowledge be opened and set aflowing") as the inevitable political terminus of Protestantism and specifically Puritanism. By mustering the original fathers on the side of enlightenment, Adams was able to present opposition to the Stamp Act—an opposition that united the colonies and presaged revolution—as part of filial piety. Instead of eliding, as Adams does, the differences between the Puritan and revolutionary generations, Warner accents them. He shows that the purposes, uses, and meaning of print underwent a radical, albeit gradual, transformation throughout the eighteenth century. The Puritans, as Adams had noted, did not suffer from the "religious horror of letters" typical of priestly ages; they did, however, assign a purely religious—or, as Warner says, "conservative"—function to letters. Cotton Mather, himself the author of more than four hundred works and possessor of a seven-thousand-volume library, was a great collector and promoter of devotional and theological literature. By close application to such works it was hoped that individual readers would themselves be imprinted or stamped with the spirit and word of God. Warner makes much of this metaphor of "impression," for it indicates that the Puritans conceived of the moral effects of print in terms of authority and discipleship—"the perfect reception by the copy of a master original"—rather than in democratic or individualist terms. For the practitioners of Mather's "religion of the closet" (Matthew 6.5–6), reading was an intensely personal exercise in sacred internalization, quite different from the thrusting, libertarian activity Adams describes.

According to Warner, the shift from "a technology of privacy underwritten by divine authority" to "a technology of publicity whose meaning in the last analysis is civic and emancipatory" cannot be explained by an artifactual teleology. Neither can it be explained by

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any re-orienting mechanical advances. Warner notes that from Gutenberg to Benjamin Franklin there were scarcely any improvements in the trade; three centuries of printers used the same wooden flatbed handpress. What then happened that so entwined print with democratic politics—with debate and opposition and the formation of public opinion? Although a printing trade had operated in the British colonies since 1639 (and, indeed, a full century earlier in Mexico City), forthrightly political publications were rare before 1720. Around that time, in Boston and other Atlantic seaports, something on the order of a structural transformation of the public sphere occurred, and hand in hand with it came the development of a modernizing public print discourse. In 1693, a Maryland printer had been jailed for publishing the proceedings of the legislature. By 1725, however, coincident with the rise of legislative predominance vis-à-vis colonial governors, the Maryland Assembly was itself making provision for publication, offering an official record to the citizens for their approval.

As representation came to be understood in a new way—with lawmakers having an obligation to submit their actions to review and to seek instruction from the voters, and citizens having a duty to familiarize themselves with public measures, and indeed to make public their own thoughts on issues of the day—the medium of print took on new significance. The technology proved protean, accommodating new forms to answer new purposes. Broadsides, pamphlets, and newspapers proliferated, enabling the people to supervise their representatives without the necessity of their congregating in church or town meetings. That abstraction called "the public" was born. As Warner, with just a touch of his usual opacity, explains it: "The public was constructed on the basis of its metonymic embodiment in printed artifacts. . . . These artifacts represented the material reality of an abstract public: a *res publica* of letters."

Warner examines the characteristics of this new paradigm of print and of politics, highlighting "the impersonality of its norms and the negativity of its citizens." One of the most favored forms of eighteenth-century political debate was the epistolary pamphlet. By means of the pose of correspondence, the author of a work such as the one Warner discusses, *A Letter from a Freeholder, to a Member of the Lower House of Assembly,* exposes to an illimitable readership what an earlier age would have regarded as private. The pamphleteer, moreover, writes in his generalized capacity as a freeholder, not as a particular individual. What Warner denominates the "principle of negativity" expresses itself also in the eighteenth century's "distinct preference for fictitious personae." The most famous instance is, of course, Publius, pseudonymous author of the *Federalist Papers*. For sheer multiplicity of public personalities, however, Benjamin Franklin is unmatched; while one scholar counts forty-two pen names in an eighteen-year period, no one has yet done a fully tally of Franklin's seventy-two-year career in print.

In our own age where political participation is conceived of as irredeemably driven by self-interest or, at best, partisanship, and where the existence of the common good is routinely denied, it requires a leap of the imagination to understand how these abstract and universalizing norms of discourse really brought into being a public arena separate from civil society. Today's contributors to public debate must identify themselves and their affiliations (should they fail to air their personal, party, and professional credentials and biases, the editors will often do it for them in their "tag line"). The screening off of the personal and the particular is no longer viewed as an essential part of the aspiration to public-spiritedness. Anonymity has become suspect. (Now that the *New Republic*'s TRB signs his columns, the last holdout may be THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR's own Aristides.)

Although Warner acknowledges the potential inclusiveness (that is, participation without regard to race, sex, class, or creed) of the "principle of negativity," he insists that "radical though the principle seems in retrospect, it did not in practice allow access to the public arena for women, or blacks, or Indians, or the unpropertied, or various persons classed as criminal." This was so, Warner argues, because of a "covert identification of print consumption with the community of propertied white males." One is willing to admit the existence of such a covert identification—one maintained, with respect to blacks, by systematic and often brutal attempts to prevent slaves from learning to read and, with respect

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to women, by circumscribing their education, allowing them reading but generally not writing. In a fascinating historical tidbit, Warner relates that throughout the eighteenth century reading and writing were taught separately, with several years of Bible reading in "woman schools" preceding writing instruction in "masters' schools." It seems that this division was an institutionalized version of the pattern of home schooling. As Increase Mather testified: "I learned to read of my mother. I learned to write of Father."

It seems to me, however, that Warner underestimates the natural expansiveness of the new conception of the public sphere. Whatever white males may have done to secure their monopoly on the printed word, they had also brought about an order that offered no justification for that monopoly. It was only a matter of time before the monopoly itself disappeared. Warner neglects to relate such facts as that the author of the first history of the American Revolution, and a noted polemicist, was a woman, Mercy Otis Warren. He prefers to give himself up to lucubrations on the cognitive dissonance experienced by any woman who wields a pen. (Pen, of course, equals phallus; the similarly shaped crocheting needle presumably does not.)

Along with his more theoretical attempt to ascertain the defining features of republican print discourse, Warner documents its local catalytic incidents: the Maryland tobacco-regulation debate, the Boston currency dispute, and the Zenger trial in New York. He directs attention to the role that early capitalism played in the emergence of new contexts for print. It is no accident that Boston, a leading seaport and center of trade, hosted three of the first four newspapers in the American colonies and became a mecca for both publishers and patriots. There was, it seems, a mutual articulation of the public, the market, and the press, yielding the enlightened commercial republic. Accordingly, when Britain's exertion of imperial authority took the form of the Stamp Act (a revenue measure whereby all publications and legal documents were to bear the imprint of a stamp, on paper available from officially appointed distributors), it struck the colonies as the most pernicious form of taxation. To pay a duty of a penny per sheet of newspaper, two pounds per college diploma, four pence per bill of lading,

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twopence per almanac, and likewise for fifty-five different printed items was more than just a pecuniary annoyance. A tax on print—the very form in which the people incorporated itself—was seen as nothing less than an assault on political liberty, an attempt to curtail the public sphere.

Of course, the republic constituted by letters reaches its apogee in the invention of the world's first written constitution. Warner offers an intelligent, if unremittingly academic, discussion of the meaning of the Constitution's printedness—a discussion that emphasizes the drafters' unique handling of the problem of popular sovereignty and the legality of law. Before examining print writ large in the polity, however, Warner examines print in the soul, with a chapter on the quintessential man of letters, Benjamin Franklin. Warner asks in effect what individuals are like under the new dispensation. Finally, Warner concludes by pointing to the rapid erosion of republican print culture at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Through an analysis of a very early (pre-Cooper) American novel, *Arthur Mervyn* by Charles Brockden Brown, Warner uncovers a tension between the republican or "civic humanist paradigm of print as a public and general sphere of action" and a newer "proto-liberal paradigm of print," based on the private appropriation of polite letters. On the liberal, literary model, reading becomes a matter not of citizenship, but of consumption, as privacy, now understood in aesthetic rather than religious terms, reasserts its prerogative.

Warner, I believe, falsely shears off republicanism from liberalism. His republican paradigm is too much influenced by those scholars (for example, J. G. A. Pocock and Gordon Wood) who see the revolutionary generation as devotees of the classical republic and its ideal of citizen virtue. In fact, Federalists and Anti-Federalists alike were liberals, in the fundamental sense that they conceived of the security of individual liberty rather than the promotion of virtue as the end of government. Warner's exaggeration of the anti-liberal character of colonial republicanism is a direct result of his overriding interest in linguistic context. He goes so far as to say that "the politics of printed texts in republican America lay as much in the cultural meaning of their printedness as in their objectified nature or the content of their arguments." Because he does not pay sufficient attention to linguistic content, Warner fails to consider the possibility that the founders, or the most farsighted among them, regarded the intensity of their participation in the public sphere as anomalous—in other words, that they looked forward to their own obsolescence. Their ultimate goal was not to perpetuate some kind of modern agora of print wherein citizens might exercise their political virtue, but rather to secure a private sphere of bourgeois freedom and comfort. Thus, John Adams, in a 1780 letter to his wife, Abigail, laments his preoccupation with public business, for it keeps him from enjoying the beauties of Paris. He reconciles himself to his diplomatic labors with this nobly liberal vision:

> I must study Politicks and War that my sons may have liberty to study Mathematicks and Philosophy. My sons ought to study Mathematicks and Philosophy, Geography, natural History, Naval Architecture, navigation, Commerce and Agriculture, in order to give their Children a right to study Painting, Poetry, Musick, Architecture, Statuary, Tapestry and Porcelaine.

And from John to John Quincy to Charles Francis to Henry, that was pretty much how it went. (Whether Adams's progressive intention has been fulfilled with respect to the rest of America is, of course, questionable; for starters, reading and writing of any sort—be it paradigmatically theological, political, or aesthetic—is no longer an American assumption.)

Warner is to be commended for opposing the McLuhanite medium-as-message model. However, he has not taken his opposition far enough. Instead of invalidating the entire equation, in a sense he has simply expanded or radicalized the term *medium*. For Warner, the true medium is not print, but "printedness"—in other words, the whole horizon of culture within which print exists. The medium, suitably historicized, is still the message. Confusion of one kind or another about the status of mediums and message bearers is longstanding. In olden times, message bearers might be rewarded or punished depending on the content of their messages; today we are so advanced that the message need not even be comprehended before the analysis of the bearer begins.

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The Reader Replies . . . . . .

The Politics of Literary Reputation

I know it's hard to write a book that speaks both to an academic and a wider intellectual audience. But why does Thomas Nieman, in his review of my book about Orwell, *The Politics of Literary Reputation* (Spring 1991), dismiss it as an example of "the fashion current in academic circles"? Why does he present himself as a spokesman for "plain spokenness" against my "rhetorical posturing"? Why does he associate himself with Orwell's "directness and lack of pretension" and charge with representing "academic culture, [in which] plain-spokenness is just not highly valued"?

As I discuss in my book, there are many ways to "claim" a public figure. Mr. Nieman's easy trivialization of my "academic" book in the name of Orwell's "commonsensical" style typifies the admirer who conflates style with cultural politics. The strategy works as follows: simply conflate Orwell's much-praised plain style with your favorite ideology. Then assert, for example, that your opponent's "heavy, academic" style betrays Orwell's immaculately clean style (and, by implication, your own). In this way, you can claim Orwell's mantle *on purely stylistic grounds*, never engaging your opponent on political terrain.

Mr. Nieman devotes the first half of his review to a personal narrative of his own experience with Orwell's work, an account which interestingly recapitulates my book's discussion of Orwell as neoconservative hero. Yet, throughout the ostensibly *stylistic* critique that follows, Mr. Nieman fails to address the *political* issues that the book raises. For example, although he mentions contributions that such neoconservative intellectuals as Norman Podhoretz and Leopold Labedz have made to his own understanding of Orwell, Mr. Nieman never mentions that my book takes issue, specifically and by name, with the neoconservative image of Orwell painted by Podhoretz, Labedz, Hilton Kramer, Joseph Epstein, and others. (Epstein also failed to mention my book's discussion of neoconservative issues in his eight-page review of my book in the *New Criterion*.) Is this the way to honor George Orwell's integrity?

No. But the omissions are revealing. My book is a selective cultural history of the postwar era, framed through the wide-ranging, politically motivated reception of Orwell's work. Mr. Nieman missed an opportunity to address political questions like the shifting values of socialists and neoconservatives since Orwell's death in the 1950s, the conservative strain in the British democratic socialist tradition, etc.—not to mention more elusive issues like the politics of the plain style and the nature of heroic identification across ideological lines.

Orwell once criticized Marxist and Catholic admirers of Dickens for letting their "smelly little orthodoxies" blind them to important issues that his work raised. Mr. Nieman and Mr. Epstein fail to address a book about the politics of reputation at the level of political argument because they are beholden to the tiresome fad of their own "smelly little orthodoxy." Yes, move over Charles Sykes and Roger Kimball. Academic-bashing is definitely "in" among neoconservative intellectuals.

JOHN RODDEN
University of Texas
Austin, Texas

JOSEPH EPSTEIN replies: When I wrote about John Rodden's book in the *New Criterion*, he wrote in to complain that I had got his book quite wrong in insisting, as I did, that he had failed to leave a clear portrait of George Orwell, when a blurry portrait was what he was after. When Thomas Nieman writes about his book in THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, Mr. Rodden writes in to complain that Mr. Nieman's review is simply a case of academic-bashing. I want to suggest something that may strike Mr. Rodden as thoroughly outrageous if only because, quite evidently, it has never occurred to him before—and this is the possibility that he hasn't written a great book. Shocking though this possibility may be to him, perhaps he ought to consider it; and perhaps after he does—who knows?—he may even save a bit on postage.

The New Segregation on Campus

Of your readers' thoughtful replies in the Summer 1991 issue, the rather long response by the Reverend Donald R. Caughey to Dinesh D'Souza's article "The New Segregation on Campus" stands

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out for its stridency, not a quality one associates with the measured strains of your journal. The Reverend's letter raises some serious questions that unfortunately are too soon lost in the mist arising from his zeal for cultural pluralism, that is, "to learn to live in a pluralistic world where understanding several languages and cultural perspectives will be the vital qualities of the educated person and successful citizen."

To say that every ethnic group must oppose white tyranny as well as discover its own vital ethnicity is to sound the death knell not for white tyranny but for American language and culture. Racism is everybody's problem and is not, as the Reverend would have it, "primarily a white problem."

Further, there must be reasons why "white power," to use the Reverend's fashionable gloss, "still runs things"; and there must be reasons why this should be so, or is so—reasons other than (but not excluding) "white racism" and white "tyranny" (the founding of the country on essentially Lockean principles, for example, as well as the blood, sweat and tears that went into the country's development, and the performance of its citizens, as described by Bernard D. Davis in an accompanying letter replying to D'Souza's article). But the Reverend refuses to address these other questions. He merely assumes the supremacy of his position, cultural pluralism, much in the same way he accuses "whites" of assuming theirs. Thus, by "promoting fear from intimidation," as another reader, David Albenda, puts it in a related topic, the Reverend limits his argument, his appeal and his credibility. Not a happy situation, indeed.

Finally, the linguistic pluralism that the Reverend envisions (and leaving aside the question of elitism implicit in that vision, i.e., the dualism between polyglot intellectuals and a growing illiteracy) would surely have a decidedly monistic destiny, a new lingua franca that would again strive to be the lettuce in the salad, or what the Reverend dismisses as white ethnicity, if only for linguistically pernicious reasons (not even he can fathom), much the way modern English has evolved over the past fifteen hundred years—or American English over the past two hundred. That is the real pluralism that is going on; and it will continue to go on, despite the intimidating pronouncements of the Reverend and his kind.

HARRY WILLIAMS
Washington, D.C.

Why Were We Surprised?

I read with interest W. R. Connor's "Why Were We Surprised?" from the Spring 1991 SCHOLAR, and I was as surprised as anyone over the collapse of the communist systems in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. However, I would not have been surprised at all if I had believed what my father-in-law told me in Moscow two decades ago, shortly before his death.

By way of background, he was born around 1905 in Russia. As a result he saw the transition of the country into the communist state as he was growing up. A rather well-educated electrical engineer, he traveled throughout Russia and worked on many of its large electrical power projects. In 1937 he made a disparaging remark about Stalin. He was arrested in the middle of the night and spent three years in a Gulag. A fierce free spirit, as many Russians are, he said if he had to do it over, he would still have said what he said.

When we last saw him in 1971, he made a very prophetic comment we did not take seriously. He said, "The system will not last through this century. I will not live to see its demise, but you will. Communism will not last, mark my words."

I had forgotten about this conversation until a few months ago when my wife reminded me of what he had said. She also remembers as a youth in Russia there was a strong undercurrent of hatred for the system. Stalin was said to be Ivan the Terrible, reincarnated. As the old guard, like the old believers, passed away, a new generation of Russians has inherited the state. They learned from their early childhood to distrust, fear, and despise the system. We shouldn't have been surprised. Most Russians weren't.

CHARLES ADAMS
Buffalo, New York

Missing Measures

Anent Meg Schoerke's review of Timothy Steele's *Missing Measures: Modern Poetry and the Revolt Against Meter* in the Summer 1991 issue:

The poet doesn't state—merely implies—
So readers need to search beneath the phrase—
To find his message—though compressed in size—
Such subtlety as usually plays

Among the words—and deeds—the thoughts—events
Including spaces—period—or comma—
The secrets hidden in his incidents
As they reveal themselves—creating drama

His tempo may not match a marching meter
His form may not be rigid—"comme il faut"

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As feelings spiral downward—or they climb—
His rhythms not too tidy—might be neater
As images congeal—or start to flow—
But poets—don't depend upon the rhyme.

ALFRED W. ISRAELSTAM
Highland Park, Illinois

The Great-Teacher Myth

Robert Heilman's "The Great-Teacher Myth" in the Summer 1991 AMERICAN SCHOLAR, in which the author dissects Professor Keating, hero of the motion picture *Dead Poets Society*, reads very much like the classic, self-serving, argumentum of the sedulous drudge in academe, who exalts education primarily for its regimental aspects, who views learning as an enterprise best conducted in an ambiance of grim conformity, and who sees any and all deviation as suspect.

In his demolishing of straw man Keating, Heilman points out: "But it is a rare Keating who is content to provide a gospel in only one field of knowledge. He is instinctively a generalist who roams the great wide world of information and ideas and makes authoritative disclosures everywhere."

Yet, even while decrying this educational adventurism by uncredentialed Keatings, Heilman, a duly certified "Professor Emeritus of English," seems to have succumbed to this same generalist temptation as evidenced by his own venture into the realm of political science, pontificating that "organized leftists operate wholly within the melodramatic sense of a good versus evil world, which I have identified as an element in the American sensibility: the naive leftists believe it, and the activist plotters count upon it and use it."

Ultimately, we are made privy to the conclusion that "the maverick's charisma as a dart thrower makes him seem a utopian seer. Fortunately he does not have a program; if he did, he would become a menace, probably Marxist."

All of which strongly suggests that Professor Heilman views any analysis of or deviation from accepted norms as suspect, perhaps even dangerous, and instructors who advocate such analyses as clearly outside acceptable academic circles, however valuable they may be as "safety valves" for the more restive students and however entertaining they may be.

In sum, Heilman's observations seem more suggestive of the philosophy and views of the late Joseph McCarthy than of any reasoned system of logic. Indeed, cynics may also suspect an unstated motivation, that perhaps the good Professor is not the entertainer and orator he would like to be and, accordingly, has rationalized his deficiencies by condemning those who have these attributes.

Not surprisingly, instructors of Heilman's all-too-common mind-set will continue to find themselves spurned by students who opt instead for professors of more congenial stripe. Eventually, most Heilmans are relegated to that unfortunate coterie of campus curmudgeons whose courses are given a very wide berth, save for those unfortunates whose major fields of study compel their attendance.

I sympathize with Professor Heilman's students and remain convinced that few of them will have been persuaded to his views, for, while many of them may be "naive leftists," surely they cannot be THAT naive.

B. D. TUTOLI, JR.
St. Petersburg, Florida

First, Robert B. Heilman's essay "The Great-Teacher Myth" (Summer 1991) angered me. Later, and still, it mainly makes me sad. Mr. Heilman's courses in Seattle no doubt rarely suffer from overcrowding; you know, the kind of classes that positively everyone wants to take. What a relief to the saturnine and sullen professor that young people, eager for tidbits about life, hoping to negotiate the difficult terrain of their youth a little more capably, seek guidance elsewhere. That he does not have to worry about puerile young minds positioning themselves at his office door twice a week must be such a relief. From those professors like the venerable and skittish Mr. Heilman whom I had for teachers in boarding school and later in college that were standoffish, I learned only that they lived a rather more miserable life than I wanted someday to. But even in that lesson, I suppose, lurked something of value: for it was those heroic and rare Keatings, instead, from whom I discovered myself and, what is more important, my potential.

Second, I submit that the film *Dead Poets Society* is neither old-fashioned melodrama nor educational criticism. By the way, just what exactly is old-fashioned melodrama anyway? I suppose the persnickety Mr. Heilman might suggest we take time and read something nice and remote—ever safe—like *Portrait of a Lady*. Perhaps Mr. Heilman is really less frustrated with the Keatings hiking around his campus than he is in quiet and retreated cahoots with Miss Isabel Archer; all along rathering not to touch the cup of experience because he can see it but not feel it.

Next, why must Keating's moralism be so pejorative? Is it not those few who, whether adulated or not, in rising to challenge the status quo—by whatever motivation—in turn challenge each of us to stop momentarily and take stock of ourselves and of the environment we—like it or not—share? Whatever Keating's motives may have been is irrelevant; the Keatings of this world stir up the rest of us to at least look in the mirror every once in a while. I am sorry that Mr. Heilman blames Keating for forcing

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him to discover, after seeing himself in the mirror, that perhaps something was staring back at him that was a little less than likeable.

Fourth, the position of "The Great-Teacher Myth" regarding the film's use of the (both contrived and actual) text *Understanding Poetry* misses the film's point entirely. The essay's author is totally oblivious to the film's true and unmistakable intent there, which was to create such a text merely and solely as an allegory for the real lesson at hand: understanding life; as if one could learn life from a textbook. Teachers locked away in the archival and dusty stacks, running from sunshine and love—and poetry—all too often try to corral the rest of us into their own miserable and frightened existences, as if they somehow thought the larger the group, the more valid the group therefore is. Such shrinking egoism smacks more of something Nixon would have contrived than of what we ought to expect from a Professor Emeritus of Letters at an esteemed university.

Those teachers against whom Keating's beliefs ran contrary were precisely those stale and impotent men who are at the core of the cliché: those who can't, teach. Fearing exposure of their own frailties—which no one really gives a damn about anyway—they seek not to free young people from the potentially dangerous chains of low self-esteem, but instead to tighten the mean grip of self-doubt. In this way, they can perpetuate the real illusion: that they themselves hold the keys to the universe; fooling their students into forgetting that *their professors—save our few Keatings—are dispensable.*

Last, young people—for all sorts of reasons—are not always naturally drawn to certain subjects. Mr. Heilman is an English professor presumably because he either does not care as much for or is a little less capable in other areas such as science or engineering. It matters much less why some fresh young mind is drawn towards a poem, for instance, than *that* he was drawn to the poem at all.

Until being drawn to read, what he might do with what he learns is not important because he has not yet read it. The trick is getting him to open the book.

For young people, it is often the very personality, if cultish, of one single teacher, if guru, who inspires them to learn. Browsing the bookstore as a fourteen-year-old will simply not be enough to inspire a young person to read about Richard III, for example. Neither, for that matter, will simply demanding that he read it, if the demand comes from a cheerless old curmudgeon unable to applaud even sunshine in his old age. Suggest, however, to a young boy or girl that there is something intriguing about the subject at hand, and he or she will never close the book until it has been completed. Like it or not, it is the Keatings who get us to read Shakespeare and enjoy it. Perverse as it may sound, we read *Troilus and Cressida* not nearly as often for Chaucer's genius as for the teacher's prowess in soliciting us.

Who cares what the drawing card is, so long as the reading gets done, and the material internalized?

In the end, Keating gave his students the gift of individuality realized and the greater sense to rebel against the uptight morality that demanded they subordinate their individuality to become robots able to recite—rotely—who wrote what when. Keating inured impressionable young people to the belief that they alone determine their self-worth. What more should be obtained from an education?

CHARLES Z. BUKI
Washington, D.C.

ROBERT HEILMAN replies: Oh dear, the Innocents are on the prowl again. Mr. Tutoli is evidently an Innocent of the Marxist stamp and so believes that any casual anti-Marxist observation must identify the observer as a classroom tyrant and a McCarthyite. Well, such simplicities of belief do appear to make life more manageable. Mr. Buki does not like Henry James and concludes, therefore, that I like Richard Nixon, see terrible images in the mirror, and have long suffered from a total dearth of students.

One trouble with Innocents is that they do not read texts very well. Perhaps innocence and irony are incompatible. Neither Mr. Buki nor Mr. Tutoli noticed my well-nigh extravagant efforts to develop the point that Keatings may indeed stimulate contributions to their institutions even while they imply that the institutions are pretty defective. I wonder whether my critics are regular contributors to the institutions where the resident Keatings clearly made a strong impact upon their (I suppose) much younger selves.

Oddly, it is not only hostile readers who may not notice ironic implications. A very good scholar and teacher writes, "You have achieved the first literate defense of those scoundrels" (perhaps he includes football players in the class). From a very successful teacher: "I enjoyed your portraits of those fakes."

One writer shows a reassuring perception of irony: "That you have found some judicious charity to expend on the Keatings of the world is a cause for regret. Why be nice? Life is too short."

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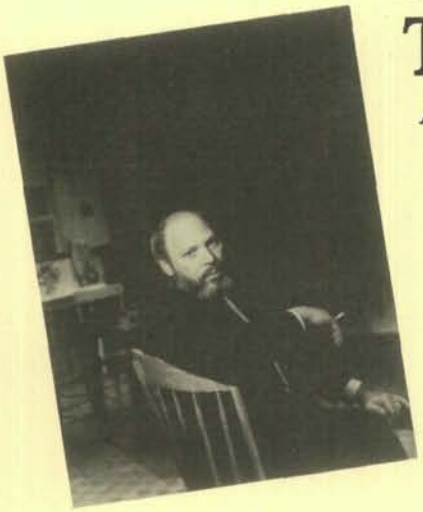

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